



Higher Education Review of Cleveland College of Art and Design

February 2016

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About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Cleveland College of Art and Design. The review took place from 3 to 5 February 2016 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Mr Jonathan Doney
- Ms Mary Blauciak
- Miss Nicole Natur (student reviewer).

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

In Higher Education Review, the QAA review team:

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

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. [Explanations of the findings](#) are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 6.

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

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

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

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code.

² Higher Education Review themes:
www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2859.

³ QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.

⁴ Higher Education Review web pages:
www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/higher-education-review.

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Cleveland College of Art and Design

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Cleveland College of Art and Design.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities is **commended**.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Cleveland College of Art and Design.

- The thorough and detailed integration of the College's reporting mechanisms with awarding body requirements for the monitoring and maintenance of academic standards (Expectations A2.1 and B7).
- The comprehensive support offered to staff for personal development and scholarly activity (Expectations B3 and Enhancement).
- The fully integrated and effective approach to employability that ensures students are prepared for professional practice in the creative industries (Expectations B4, A3.4, B10 and Enhancement).
- The strategic approach to enhancement which has developed a shared ethos of continuous improvement, empowering staff and enabling students to realise their full potential (Expectation B4 and Enhancement).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendation** to Cleveland College of Art and Design.

By September 2016:

- provide clear guidance to all students on the strategies in place to support the completion of an academic module while on work experience (Expectation B10).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following action that Cleveland College of Art and Design is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students.

- The steps being taken to involve students in all quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms (Expectation B5).

Theme: Student Employability

Cleveland College of Art and Design (the College) recognises employability with strategic importance that is underpinned in its mission statement, the Strategic Plan and the Higher

Education Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (HELT&AS). The focus on employability has resulted in a re-evaluation of its position to enhance the quality of learning experiences; to ensure that its students have the best opportunities to establish themselves as professional practitioners in employment or further study; and to meet the needs of local, regional and/or national employers with skilled and employable graduates.

Led by the Head of Employability and Enterprise, in 2013-14 the College launched Folio, an umbrella brand of CCAD Creative. It provides extracurricular support, activities, facilities, services, one-to-one mentoring, personal development planning (PDP) support, mock interviews, enterprise advice and information that is accessible to all students, including a dedicated area on the virtual learning environment (VLE). The Employability and Enterprise Strategy sets out how the service aims to enhance the quality and industrial relevance of the College's undergraduate provision in the context of its strategic objectives. The College has invested heavily in the service that Folio provides, which is fully integrated with the curriculum of all programmes.

An Industrial Liaison Group (ILG) supports the College in the wide range of employability activities across the College. The College is currently reviewing the way in which the ILG operates and how its membership can be more effective to the benefit of students.

All students have the opportunity to participate in work experience during their period of undergraduate study at the College. Opportunities also exist for students to exhibit work alongside professionals at regional, national and international trade shows and exhibitions, final year shows and viewings for film screenings. Networking and partnership events provide further opportunities for students to meet practitioners and potential employers.

Sector-specific professional studies modules are common to all programmes and are integral to the development of professional practice and employability. These modules enable students to develop their understanding of their specialist creative sector and ensures embedding and delivery of employability skills in the curriculum.

About Cleveland College of Art and Design

The College is situated on the coast of northeast England and was first opened in 1874 in Church Street Athenaeum, Hartlepool, as the West Hartlepool School of Art. Cleveland College of Art and Design (CCAD) was founded in the 1970s by the merger of West Hartlepool School of Art and Middlesbrough School of Art, which had opened in 1960. The merger created two campuses, one in Middlesbrough and one in Hartlepool, 15 miles away, both of which delivered a combination of further education and higher education provision until 2007. An incremental growth in higher education and the need to develop a coherent higher education community prompted the strategic decision to consolidate the College's higher education provision on one site. This was facilitated by the acquisition of previous Hartlepool Council buildings and capital investment in the Hartlepool campus. The relocation was fully completed by the start of 2011-2012. Student social areas were upgraded and redeveloped on both campuses between 2010 and 2012 to enhance the student experience. The College has also worked in collaboration with a local Hartlepool housing group to provide higher education student residential accommodation within very close proximity to the main Hartlepool campus, which has been available to students since September 2014. The College is currently engaged in projects to further extend and enhance its Hartlepool campus, to be completed in March 2017.

The College is one of only two remaining specialist art and design institutions in the further education sector in the UK, and is unique in the northeast of England as the only specialist provider of art and design education in the region. Higher education has been central to the College's ethos and portfolio of provision for over 40 years, from the initial introduction of

Higher National Diplomas in the 1970s to the current range of 10 undergraduate honours degrees.

In October 2015 there were 501 higher education students with 35 per cent progressing internally from the College's further education provision. The College aims to increase the internal progression rate over the next three years in order to achieve sustained growth in higher education numbers. Including management, academic and support staff, the College currently employs 155 full-time equivalent members of staff on permanent or fixed-term contracts (not including additional hourly paid teaching staff) across both campuses. Academic staff are dedicated to teaching exclusively either on higher education programmes in Hartlepool or on further education programmes at Middlesbrough.

In the 1990s, the agreement of a degree-awarding partnership between the College and the University of Teesside (now Teesside University) in Middlesbrough resulted in the validation of a variety of undergraduate degree and foundation degree programmes between 1995 and 2006. All of the College's higher education programmes are directly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and continue to be validated by a single degree-awarding body. Since September 2012, this has been the Arts University Bournemouth (AUB). The degree-awarding relationship with Teesside University, after an overlapping period with AUB, ended in June 2014.

As a specialist art and design college the honours degree programmes are all based in the creative sector, with Textiles and Surface Design, Contemporary Textile Products, Textiles, Production Design for Stage and Screen, Costume Interpretation with Design, and Fashion in the School of Design. The School of Visual Arts provides Photography, Creative Film and Moving Image Production, Illustration for Commercial Application, Graphic Design and Communication, and Fine Art.

The last Ofsted inspection in June 2009 graded the College as 'Outstanding'; notably, it is the only specialist college of art and design in the country to achieve this rating. The 2011 Integrated Quality and Enhancement (IQER) Summative Review concluded that there could be confidence in the College's management of academic standards, and the quality of the learning opportunities available to students. There were no recommendations following the review and all items in the action plan have been addressed, although some have been superseded or realigned to conform to changes in the degree-awarding body, new procedures and personnel. The College has built on its emphasis on employability and has begun provision of an in-house Employability and Enterprise Service Folio.

Explanation of the findings about Cleveland College of Art and Design

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a [brief glossary](#) at the end of this report. A fuller [glossary of terms](#) is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the [review method](#), also on the QAA website.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Findings

1.1 The Arts University Bournemouth (AUB) is the sole awarding body for the College's higher education BA (Hons) programmes, which are designed and delivered by the College. Throughout the validation and review processes, AUB ensures that threshold academic standards are set at the appropriate level within the FHEQ.

1.2 The College is compliant with the comprehensive quality monitoring and enhancement procedures put in place by AUB as detailed in the AUB Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook. Within the College, equally rigorous processes are applied to ensure that academic standards are maintained. The processes in place would allow Expectation A1 to be met.

1.3 The review team scrutinised a range of documents from both AUB and the College relating to the setting and maintenance of the academic standards. Meetings were held with senior, teaching and professional support staff from the College, including a representative from AUB.

1.4 The College provides 10 BA (Hons) programmes which are all validated by AUB. All programmes that lead to an award offered by the University are aligned with the FHEQ through the validation and periodic review processes and are subject to the arrangements of the assurance of standards and quality as detailed in the University's Higher Education

Quality Assurance Handbook. It is clear from an analysis of the documentation provided, and following discussion with senior and teaching staff, that the College operates efficiently and effectively in these processes.

1.5 AUB has developed qualifications descriptors that are used as references in the development and preparation of programmes for validation and periodic review. These are in line with the FHEQ as outlined in its Undergraduate Regulatory Framework (URF) and Assessment Regulations 2015-16, and the College's Higher Education Quality Policy. The latter provides the overarching framework and main reference point for both internal and external procedures for the setting and maintenance of academic standards. Programme documentation is scrutinised by the University at validation and review events to ensure that programmes are positioned at the appropriate level within the FHEQ, that learning outcomes are aligned with the appropriate qualification descriptor and that programme design takes account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. Contributing to the validation process, College staff are required to map the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) to new and existing programmes. Training has been provided to support this by the Head of Higher Education Quality and Academic Standards (HE Q&AS). As a result of this training, the sharing of good practice and information was made possible by scheduled events, including presentations to and discussions with staff.

1.6 The College makes full and appropriate use of external reference points for its higher education provision, including the FHEQ and the Quality Code. The College's Head of HE Q&AS maintains regular discussions with AUB to ensure that proposed programmes are positioned within the relevant national credit frameworks (FHEQ) and at the appropriate level (Levels 4 to 6). This process is enhanced by referencing relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. The College uses the *Subject Benchmark Statement: Art and design* for all programmes and the *Subject Benchmark Statement: Communication, media, film and cultural studies* for Creative Film and Moving Image Production, to inform programme design.

1.7 In collaboration with AUB an Operations Agreement is to be put in place for September 2016. This is designed to support the operational implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two institutions and strengthen the responsibilities of College staff.

1.8 The review team confirms that all staff show a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of AUB.

1.9 The team confirms that the College fulfils its obligations and requirements in ensuring the maintenance of academic standards by compliance with AUB regulations, policies and procedures, and where appropriate, other external reference points. In summary, the team concludes that this Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.10 The College adheres closely to the academic and assessment regulations of AUB, which governs its awards and quality monitoring procedures. Governance arrangements and the responsibilities of the College and AUB are clearly detailed in the MoU.

1.11 The Academic Board of AUB is responsible for setting and maintaining academic standards, the approval of academic frameworks and regulations, the validation and review of programmes, and the confirmation of awards to students. The Vice Principal Academic at the College is responsible for ensuring the quality and academic oversight of higher education and for ensuring that awarding body requirements are met. Programme specifications and module descriptors are agreed at the point of approval with AUB, and these procedures set academic standards and form the basis for subsequent programme delivery and assessment. The design of the academic regulations process would allow Expectation A2.1 to be met.

1.12 The review team tested the effectiveness of the arrangements through the examination of the documentation presented and discussions with staff and students. The meetings involved staff from the awarding body.

1.13 Governance of the College incorporates both further and higher education; however, higher education has its own campus, staffing, resources, accommodation and distinct quality assurance policies, procedures and processes. The recent change of degree-awarding body to AUB has given the College the opportunity to review its management structure in line with a five-year development plan for higher education. From this, five internal committees now manage, monitor and develop the College's higher education provision. These cover quality and academic standards; learning, teaching and assessment; academic planning; staff development, research and scholarly activity; and information learning technology. Each committee meets at least twice per year and has its own terms of reference. They are all chaired by the Vice Principal Academic and report to the College's Academic Board.

1.14 Currently in draft form, and derived from the MoU, the Operations Agreement will provide additional detail on the operation and the obligations of the respective institutions to each other. This agreement will require the College to present relevant information, documentation and reports to the University in a timely fashion, and to deliver programmes in accordance with the terms of the agreement. The College will also be required to work within the agreed quality management framework or other requirements that may be determined from time to time by the AUB Academic Board or Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (LTQC).

1.15 The College engages with AUB and its representatives on a range of levels, including examination boards, higher education quality and academic standards meetings, assessment standardisation events, progression and awards boards and other senior committees. The College works within the structure of the AUB URF and Assessment Regulations, which are published on the VLE and intranet for staff and students as well as being distributed to external examiners. They are central documents for staff in maintaining

academic standards and ensuring that assessment is rigorous and fair, and are used by the College's higher education managers, academic staff and academic registry to underpin delivery and assessment moderation.

1.16 Currently, students are members of most senior College committees of the Academic Board, including the Higher Education Quality and Academic Standards Committee, the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee (LTAC), and the Information Learning Technology Committee. In reviewing its terms of reference, the Academic Planning Committee now invites students to participate in discussions about new provision and developments for curriculum review. The Research and Scholarly Activity Committee plans to invite students to join its board in the future.

1.17 The College has its own examination boards in line with the AUB Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook. There are three College examination boards, attended by a senior member of AUB. External examiners attend final year College examination boards. Final recommendations from the examination boards are made to the AUB Progression and Awards Board (PAB), which is held at AUB and attended by a senior member of the College and the College's chief external examiner.

1.18 The thorough and detailed way in which the College has fully integrated its own reporting mechanisms with awarding body requirements for the monitoring and maintaining of academic standards is an example of **good practice**. In summary, the team concludes that this Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.19 The College does not have degree awarding powers and operates in partnership with AUB, which validates the higher education programmes offered by the College.

1.20 The College's definitive record of each programme and its intended learning outcomes are described within the programme specification that is approved by AUB through the validation or periodic review process. The programme specification is used as a reference point for the delivery of the programme by academic staff, assessment of student work by academic staff and external examiners and during monitoring and review. The programme handbooks include additional information that is generic to all programmes, is maintained annually to reflect any changes and is updated centrally by the Head of HE Q&AS.

1.21 Each programme has a programme handbook that includes module descriptors with learning outcomes and the programme specification. The Programme Handbooks are made readily available to staff on the intranet, to students on the College website and VLE, to external examiners and to AUB. This allows programme specifications to be used effectively as a reference point for the delivery of programmes by academic staff and external examiners.

1.22 The responsibility for modifications to programmes is shared by both the College and AUB. The provisions for ensuring the maintenance of definitive records of programmes through formal processes, and the use of programme handbooks as an academic reference for delivery and assessment of programmes that is made available for all involved in the College and AUB, would allow Expectation A2.2 to be met.

1.23 The review team tested the Expectation by speaking to senior, teaching and professional support services staff, by examination of the College VLE and College website, and by reading examples of programme handbooks, a BA (Hons) Fashion Level 4 module handbook and the MoU.

1.24 Major and minor modifications of validated programmes are clearly distinguished from one another in the AUB Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook, which also sets out the processes to be followed. Approval of minor modifications of validated programmes is carried out by the AUB Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee (AUB LTQC). Major modification approval involves a full validation or periodic review event. Staff understand the distinguishing features of a major and minor modification of validated programmes and are confident in their approach to these processes. Following the defined processes the College has successfully submitted minor modifications to programmes in two instances.

1.25 The definitive records of programmes are presented as programme handbooks and module handbooks, and clearly set out intended learning outcomes and structures that are accessible for both staff and students. Overall, the review team concludes that the College maintains definitive records of all its validated programmes and operates clear and set

processes for both major and minor modification of all programmes. Therefore the Expectation is met and the risk low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

1.26 As outlined previously, oversight, scrutiny and final approval of taught programmes rests with AUB. The AUB Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook (Sections D, E, and J) guides consistency of approach through a clear definition of process with associated templates. In addition, the College Higher Education Quality Policy underlines a commitment to annual monitoring and review.

1.27 AUB is responsible for appointing the chair and AUB student members of validation and review panels. Formal approval processes ensure that all regulatory requirements are met and that programmes meet or exceed UK threshold academic standards. The College submits the names of two external members for each validation or periodic review event that is subject to approval by the AUB LTQC.

1.28 The review team tested the operation and effectiveness of programme design and approval processes through scrutiny of documents and in meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff, employers and students.

1.29 AUB works effectively with the College to ensure that programmes meet or exceed UK threshold academic standards through a process that includes locating each programme at the appropriate level of the FHEQ; ensuring that learning outcomes are aligned with the relevant qualification descriptor; assigning appropriate credit values; taking account of the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement; and checking that assessment schemes adequately meet the intended learning outcomes. In many cases employers' views are taken into account during the development and review of programmes.

1.30 The College Academic Planning (AP) Committee considers new programmes, and minor modifications to existing programmes or modules, before more detailed proposals can be progressed to AUB. This ensures that they have a sound rationale and can be resourced. If successful, they progress to the AUB where a more detailed proposal is required.

1.31 During the validation or periodic review event, panel members work within prescribed Terms of Reference and to a standard agenda set by AUB. The process is regarded as both rigorous and helpful in further developing the confidence of College staff to articulate fully the content of programmes at degree level.

1.32 There have been 12 approvals, including an Extended Study Route (ESR) for all programmes between 2013 and 2015. The validation period does not normally exceed five years and programmes are subject to periodic review within that time. There has been a validation or periodic review event each year since the partnership began.

1.33 Overall, the regulations and procedures for programme design and approval are appropriately designed and effectively implemented by the College, and are duly overseen and reviewed by AUB. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation A3.1 is met and the level of risk low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

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

Findings

1.34 Ultimate responsibility and oversight of assessment rests with AUB. Assessment processes and methodologies are approved as part of AUB approval and routine monitoring processes. Responsibility for day-to-day execution of assessment, moderation and feedback is devolved to the College. The College is responsible for ensuring that the AUB URF and Assessment Regulations are applied consistently and thoroughly.

1.35 Assessment regulations, policies and procedures are available to students on the VLE and to staff on the intranet. This includes the Mitigation Policy, Accreditation of Prior Learning (APCL/APEL) Procedure, Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure and the Academic Dishonesty (Cheating) Policy and Procedure. Internal verification is conducted within AUB policy. A moderation record is completed as part of the summative module assessment record. These are verified by the programme leader, or Head of School or Head of Higher Education Quality and Academic Standards (HE Q&AS) if the programme leader has been involved in marking.

1.36 Reasonable adjustment can be made for students with protected characteristics within the URF and Assessment Regulations. Guidance is given to academic staff on ensuring equivalence, in consultation with the Vice Principal Academic, or nominee, as chair of the College examination board.

1.37 Consistency and fairness in marking is assured through an internal and external process of moderation. Prior to examination boards, the College conducts an annual assessment standardisation event to monitor marking across programmes. This is observed by an academic representative from AUB. Recommendations from the College's examination boards are considered against national profiles. Well established assessment practices are confirmed by external examiners. These policies and processes enable Expectation A3.2 to be met.

1.38 The review team examined a range of documentation to test how the processes for awarding credit operate in practice. This includes the self-evaluation document submitted by the College for this review, the student submission, Higher Education Quality Policy and meetings with academic staff.

1.39 Assessment regulations, including those relating to final assessment of modules, are clearly outlined to students through module handbooks. The College uses the AUB 'notched' system of marking to identify clearly the differentiation between low, middle and high achievement. Referral and retake grades are capped at 40 per cent. Further guidance is offered to College staff about levels of achievement by students against module learning outcomes at Levels 4 to 6 to ensure alignment and standardisation of grading.

1.40 In September 2015, the College schedule included for the first time specific points where non-submissions and referrals will be reviewed to ensure referral and resubmission deadlines are adhered to. Students in need of support are identified and supporting action

taken. The Academic Registry issues and receives all referral work to ensure consistency. Academic staff are required to submit referral work to be sent to relevant students within the Academic Registry timeline.

1.41 Staff work to an annual assessment schedule for submission of module marks to the College's Academic Registry. Module marks are submitted to AUB and from this profiles are generated for the College's examination boards, where module assessment outcomes are considered against historical and national data and recommendations for progression and awards made to the AUB PAB.

1.42 The URF and Assessment Regulations state that assessment of any final year modules completed after week 20 will be summative. This applies to the Final Major Project (60 credits) and Professional Practice (20 credits) modules on all of the College's higher education programmes. AUB retains control of all certificates and transcripts for its awards. Certificates are supplied to the College's Academic Registry for posting to individual students. Higher Education Achievement Reports were issued to all graduating students for the first time in 2015.

1.43 The College applies clearly defined learning outcomes at programme and module level, which are appropriately aligned to assessment. Measures are in place to ensure appropriate assessment and moderation. External examiners are involved in setting and confirming the achievement of learning outcomes.

1.44 The review team concludes that the College meets, with low risk, the Expectation for the awarding of credit and qualifications where the achievement of relevant learning outcomes have been demonstrated through assessment.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

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

Findings

1.45 The College uses clearly understood regulations, policies and templates to inform and guide the process of monitoring and review, which is carried out in line with processes stated in the AUB Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook (section E) and reinforced by the College's Higher Education Quality Policy. External expertise is incorporated appropriately in the review process, which also includes student representation from AUB.

1.46 The Undergraduate Annual Programme Review (APR) and Annual Overview Report (AOR) Procedure underpins the College annual monitoring and review process. Cross-read APR reports feed into the AOR as demanded by the AUB MoU and in line with the College's strategic objective of 'excellence in teaching, learning and assessment'.

1.47 Programmes are monitored on an annual basis and periodically reviewed every five years. The College works within the AUB regulatory framework, which is clearly articulated and would enable Expectation A3.3 to be met.

1.48 A range of documentation was examined by the review team to test how the processes for the design, development and approval of programmes operates in practice. This included the self-evaluation document, the student submission, Higher Education Quality Policy and MoU. The review team also discussed details in meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff, students and employers.

1.49 A risk-based approach has been adopted to review quality and academic standards and measure student achievement against UK reference points. This includes an evaluation of evidence relating to recruitment, retention, progression, achievement and the student profile, with student, external examiner and other stakeholder feedback.

1.50 The APR and AOR procedure introduced in 2013-14 reflects a refocus to the risk-based approach. Roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined and the process is reviewed annually by the College HE Q&AS Committee. The effectiveness of the annual monitoring and review process is evaluated at an extraordinary meeting of the HE Q&AS Committee, convened annually to confirm the APR reports. The AOR is submitted to AUB's LTQC, which enables programme annual monitoring and review to contribute to the overall strategic oversight of quality assurance.

1.51 Staff at all levels are involved in the operation of monitoring and periodic review, with appropriate guidance including a standard programme team APR meeting agenda and training given to those involved in the process. For example, programme teams are provided with a list of potential areas of risk to facilitate discussions during APR meetings.

1.52 The College has rigorous programme monitoring and review regulations, policies and procedures in place, which are appropriately analytical and effectively overseen. The review team concludes that Expectation A3.3 is met in both design and operation and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

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

Findings

1.53 The College responds to issues raised by external specialists within the annual review processes of AUB. The College discusses and responds to the findings of external examiner reports through regular and systematic evaluation and monitoring reporting procedures. Nominations for external examiners are made by the College and received by AUB. Throughout the development and approval processes for new programmes, additional feedback from external partners, such as employers and industry experts, is sought. The adoption of a new Programme Design, Development and Approval procedure, presented to the Academic Board in January 2016 for implementation in September 2016, will clarify the formal processes involved based on the guidance contained in AUB's URF and quality assurance handbook.

1.54 Awarding body and College-led processes are in place, which would enable this Expectation to be met.

1.55 The review team considered a range of documents relating to external advisers, examiners and verifiers and held meetings with senior and academic staff and students.

1.56 External expertise from external examiners, employers and industry experts is sought by the College throughout the development, design, approval, and validation of new, and periodic review of existing programmes. The College recognises that it does not capture feedback from the professional and industrial sector efficiently and that this needs to be recorded more formally. External academic and industry experts are also included in panel lists for validation and periodic review events with AUB.

1.57 The ILG supports the College in ensuring that the curriculum and resources enable students to develop employability skills that are appropriate to the needs of industry. Members of the ILG have regular contact with programmes and provide feedback for both academic staff and students regarding the currency, relevance and quality of work produced at each level, as well as contributions to curriculum content. The ILG has its own terms of reference and is convened by the Head of Employability and Enterprise. Recommendations from ILG are considered by the LTAC.

1.58 External examiners are appointed by AUB in accordance with the Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook and the College's Higher Education Quality Policy, which clearly articulate their roles and responsibilities. Nominations are made by the College, which are submitted to AUB's Deputy Vice Chancellor with approved nominations reported to AUB's LTQ. All programmes have one external examiner and from these a chief external examiner is nominated by the College and approved by AUB. The chief external examiner oversees and maintains the consistent application of standards and procedures for the College's programmes.

1.59 Many of the College's higher education teaching staff currently hold appointments as an external examiner. The College actively encourages this as it enables staff not only to enhance their practice but also to compare practice and standards outside their own

institution. The College measures the impact this is having on academic standards in discussions at the Curriculum Development Group, the Higher Education Quality and Academic Standards Committee and performance management meetings between staff and line managers before wider dissemination to staff and students.

1.60 Many staff are also practising artists and designers who maintain and develop their own creative practice outside of the College environment which, in turn, informs their teaching practice. The Curriculum Development Group discusses any potential developments that may arise as a result of these external practices, which can contribute further to an individual's performance management meeting with line managers. In addition, the College maintains affiliations with professional bodies in media and creative arts, exhibiting at trade shows, competitions and live briefs.

1.61 The review team found evidence that the College makes use of a consistent and robustly applied set of practices for employing external and independent expertise to ensure the setting and maintaining of academic standards of its programmes. The College follows and maintains thorough internal and external scrutiny and quality assurance processes for its awarding body. Therefore the team concludes that Expectation A3.4 is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations: Summary of findings

1.62 In reaching its judgement about the College's maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its awarding body, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.63 All of the applicable Expectations in this area have been met, with a judgement of low risk being reached in each case.

1.64 The College maintains academic standards by locating each programme at the appropriate level of the FHEQ; ensuring that learning outcomes are aligned with the relevant qualification descriptor; assigning appropriate credit values; taking account of the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements; and checking that assessment schemes adequately meet the intended learning outcomes. Appropriate procedures and systems maintain, review and update definitive information. Consistent and appropriate academic and regulatory frameworks are used at all times and for all levels of award. Externality is achieved through involving appropriate expert authorities in programme approval and periodic monitoring, thereby ensuring validity and relevance of higher education provision.

1.65 There was one instance of **good practice**: for Expectation A2.1, the thorough and detailed integration of the College's reporting mechanisms with awarding body requirements for the monitoring and maintenance of academic standards.

1.66 The review team concludes that the College's maintenance of threshold academic standards for awards **meets** expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes.

Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval

Findings

2.1 The College employs a strategic approach to programme design that aligns with its mission, and places emphasis on career progression. Proposals for new programmes are developed by the College and submitted to AUB for approval and validation using processes outlined in the AUB Quality Assurance Handbook.

2.2 AUB has responsibility for the quality of learning outcomes of the programmes it offers and the qualifications and credit it awards. Within the partnership operating framework, the College has flexibility to deliver validated provision and, subject to review and approval, to develop proposals for new provision. The Academic Planning (AP) Committee has oversight of the College's portfolio of provision and scrutinises proposals for programmes to proceed to development and then progress to approval, in line with AUB processes, as outlined in the AUB Higher Education Quality Handbook. College central services are involved throughout the process of programme design and approval, including involvement with validation panels. External examiners, industry and professional contacts provide externality during the preparatory stages of validation and may be nominated by the College to participate as panel members during validation.

2.3 The Head of HE Q&AS works directly with the proposing programme team(s) to agree a schedule of key dates and deadlines leading up to the validation or periodic review event. During the documentation development period, programme teams have access to a range of supporting information.

2.4 Processes for the design and approval of programmes would enable Expectation B1 to be met.

2.5 A range of documentation was examined by the review team to test how the processes for the design, development and approval of programmes operate in practice. This includes the self-evaluation document, the student submission, and the Higher Education Quality Policy. The team met senior, academic and professional support staff, students and employers.

2.6 Following initial discussions by the Curriculum Development Group, the development of a new programme begins with an internal proposal form for a new award title, which is presented to the AP Committee. This committee includes membership of staff from academic management, quality and academic standards, resources and marketing and is central to programme design and development. Existing programme performance and feedback is taken into account when considering new developments, as is strategic fit and viability.

2.7 Programme proposals granted initial approval progress to stage two, as outlined in the AUB Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook. Stage two proposals are presented back to the AP Committee, supported by feedback from students and external sources. Following approval of the stage two proposal by the AUB LTQC, the College prepares and submits required documentation using standard AUB templates.

2.8 All programmes offered by the College are three-year single honours degrees carrying academic credit at Levels 4 to 6 of the FHEQ, with 120 credits at each level. Since September 2015 all programmes are validated with the opportunity to undertake a four-year extended route through a pre-Level 4 year. This year does not carry credit but students wishing to progress to Level 4 must pass the preparatory year. There was a strategic decision not to offer a part-time route on any of the College's undergraduate programmes.

2.9 Programme structures are based on 20-credit modules or multiples in line with the AUB URF. All programmes include a 60-credit final major project module at Level 6. There is a strategic approach to programme structure, which maximises the commonality of the underpinning professional and theoretical practice, while enabling the individual disciplines to contextualise the knowledge developed within creative practice.

2.10 Each programme has individual aims and learning outcomes reflective of the specialist subject, but where suitable areas of commonality have been developed, for example professional studies, modules have the same learning outcomes at Levels 4 to 6. To promote parity at Level 6, all programmes have the same module structure but differing learning outcomes dependent on specialism.

2.11 The AUB URF requires programme teams to adopt an evidence-based approach and indicate how issues relating to quality and standards, employability, sustainability and social responsibility, equality and diversity, complementarity, resourcing and projected demand have been considered. This includes the development of skills and attributes as defined in Subject Benchmark Statement(s), and the FHEQ level descriptors. There is a requirement to consider the nature and timing of assessment to enable the achievement of learning outcomes within a cohesive and progressive structure.

2.12 Validation events include a tour of resources and a presentation by the programme team. The formal meeting is conducted exploring a range of themes defined by the AUB standard validation agenda. This is underpinned by references to the Quality Code, the FHEQ, Subject Benchmark Statement(s) and the institutional context. Verbal recommendations are made at the end of the meeting, which include the recommended period of validation or continued validation subject to approval by the AUB LTQ. Following receipt of an unconfirmed written report from AUB, the programme team is expected to provide a written response, which is submitted to the AUB LTQ for final approval. Notification of confirmed validation is held by the College's Academic Registry.

2.13 The College operates effective programme design and approval regulations and processes that underpin the quality of learning opportunities. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation B1 is met in both design and operation and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education

Findings

2.14 The responsibility for student recruitment and student admissions rests with the College and is set out within the MoU. AUB approves the Admissions Policy of the College and its amendments as part of the Institutional Approval Process and ensures that the policy is comprehensive and consistent with AUB admissions.

2.15 The College undertakes regular and varied feedback of the application process, and there are a number of formal procedures and policies implemented by the College and approved by AUB that deliver a fair and consistent admissions process. Prospective students and applicants gain clear information about the application process from the College website and prospectus and by speaking to staff. This means that the admissions process is also clear and transparent. For the reasons stated above, the design produced by the College would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.16 The review team tested the Expectation by reading the student submission and relevant sections of the self-evaluation document, the College policies on admissions and recruitment, the MoU, the College admissions, recruitment and marketing team structures and the College prospectus and website. Details were discussed in meetings with academic and professional support staff, including a representative from AUB, and in the student meeting.

2.17 The College recognises and identifies in its Undergraduate Admissions Policy and Procedure the need to be fair, transparent, accessible and easily understood by applicants. The Admissions Policy and Procedure is applied consistently across all programmes and is designed to meet the requirements of the College's Equality and Diversity Policy. The Undergraduate Admissions Policy and Procedure is supported by the Undergraduate Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL) and Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) Procedure and Undergraduate Criminal Conviction Policy.

2.18 The College has a clear structure for recruitment selection and admissions, which is administered by three teams: Marketing, Student Recruitment and Admissions. These departments are supervised by the Vice Principal Academic. The College operates a clear and concise structure showing the roles, responsibilities and actions required of each department through its Enquiry to Enrolment Communication Schedule and Higher Education Applicant Journey Group.

2.19 The Admissions Tutor used feedback regarding admissions to inform the Higher Education Applicant Communication Proposal 2015, which demonstrates the application of the Quality Code and a clear purpose and outcome of the feedback exercise. This resulted in the establishment of the Higher Education Applicant Journey Group. The staff whom the review team met were confident in the process and indicated early signs of increases in the number of applications received.

2.20 A Higher Education Interview Guide for staff is provided to all staff involved in the admissions process. Each team develops a standard set of questions for interviews to ensure consistency across programmes. The Admissions Team organises training sessions to keep staff up to date and staff are initially trained to interview by interviewing in pairs with more experienced programme leaders.

2.21 Students confirmed that information provided by the College prior to application was consistent with what the students received in terms of recruitment, admissions and the programme itself. However, the majority of students were unaware of the awarding body for their programmes prior to joining the College.

2.22 Applicants who indicate that they have a disability are contacted by email or telephone by Student Services, to confirm whether they require any additional arrangements to be in place in order to attend an interview. All staff are provided with a copy of the UCAS application form and a standardised interview form to determine an applicant's suitability before an offer is made and signed off by the Head of School.

2.23 The College has a good understanding of the Expectation in *Chapter B2* of the Quality Code. All staff are trained appropriately and are informed of their roles and responsibilities in the Recruitment, Admissions and Selection process. Students are appropriately informed of these processes, but it would be beneficial to make the identity of the awarding body clear to students. The College has strong organisational structures and processes which allows its procedures to be fair, reliable, valid and inclusive. The review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching

Findings

2.24 The College's Strategic Plan 2015-2018 clearly articulates and places considerable emphasis on maintaining and enhancing excellence in teaching and learning and on increasing higher education orientation. Underpinning this Strategic Plan, the Higher Education Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy provides the overarching framework for teaching and learning at the College and for the management and development of the quality of learning opportunities. Internal annual review and self-assessment processes contribute to quality improvement planning for enhancing the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices. The College's approach to continuing professional development (CPD) forms part of the Higher Education Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and includes formalised and comprehensive staff development and training programmes for the support of learning and teaching practices.

2.25 The policies, procedures and mechanisms in place provide a basis for effective learning and teaching, which would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.26 The review team examined a range of documents, particularly the Higher Education Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS). This was supported by meetings with senior, teaching, and support staff, students and employers.

2.27 Under the MoU with AUB, the College is responsible for delivering each programme within its validated framework to assure quality and academic standards. The College employs a Higher Education LTAS, which contains the strategic framework for managing and developing the quality of learning opportunities. This is monitored and reviewed by the LTAC.

2.28 To support this, comprehensive programme and module handbooks contextualise a variety of teaching and learning practices appropriate to the level of study. The College has a standard template for module handbooks to ensure consistency across all programmes. Module handbooks and assignment briefs are internally verified by academic staff across programmes. This procedure conforms to AUB guidance and regulations and also enables the sharing of good practice among colleagues. Students confirmed that they understand and are aware of second-marking and internal verification procedures. Curriculum design and planning of programmes takes into account developments identified in module leaders' reports and programme action plans from annual monitoring and review. External input from external examiners and employers is also sought.

2.29 The emphasis on teaching and learning at the College is to promote and foster students' individual and creative potential. Over the duration of a programme the gradual move of the student to become a more autonomous and independent learner prepares them for employment or postgraduate study. Learning agreements are in place on all programmes at Level 5 and Level 6, enabling students to negotiate their response to an assignment while still fulfilling module learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Students view these as a basic contract between themselves and the College, with the consensus being that they are beneficial in helping them to plan their assignments and in making the module aims and learning outcomes clear.

2.30 Under the supervision of the Contextual Studies Coordinator, staff have been involved in the design and delivery of seminar sessions to complement the Material Culture and Visual Culture lecture programmes. This has created opportunities for staff to develop their individual knowledge, research and teaching practice. The development of studio-based academic staff as dissertation supervisors has impacted positively on the student learning experience at Level 6. This is confirmed by students and in the external examiner report of 2014-15 for Production Design for Stage and Screen, and the chief external examiner's report for 2014-15.

2.31 Module leaders' reports and annual programme reviews highlight areas that require improvement and these are included in programme action plans for the following year. Feedback from external examiners, employers and visiting speakers is also considered at this time. Regular team meetings and committee membership enable teaching staff to share ideas and good practice regarding teaching and learning.

2.32 The College aims to provide a creative community, with the students sharing joint responsibility with staff for enhancing the value of the learning experience. The Undergraduate Student Charter summarises the responsibilities for both parties. The Charter is well known to the students, who confirmed its presence on the VLE, in programme handbooks and at various poster sites around the College.

2.33 The College receives student feedback from a variety of sources. Feedback is gathered and analysed to inform the annual monitoring and review process of teaching and learning. This analysis highlights any negative student perceptions of learning and teaching on the programmes. Any weaknesses are identified and carried through from the module leaders' reports and annual programme review reports to action plans for the following academic year. Students confirmed their participation in, and recognise the importance of, these activities and cited examples of where the College had responded positively to their feedback. Access to academic staff is rated highly by students in a number of surveys and this is confirmed in the student submission and in the meeting with students.

2.34 The Undergraduate Academic Tutorial Policy provides the framework under which academic staff conduct student tutorials and give feedback. Students are provided with both verbal and written formative feedback during modules, and with summative feedback at the end of a module. Students across all programmes confirmed that they understand the methods of assessment and that they find the feedback they receive timely, constructive and developmental. In addition, regular group critiques are held throughout an assignment or module during which students present their work and receive formative feedback on their progress. Depending on the nature of the assignment these critiques would normally contain members of staff and other students on the programme and may also involve potential employers or visiting professionals.

2.35 Students are entitled to at least one formally recorded academic tutorial with their programme leader or nominated tutor, once per semester, and guidance for students regarding these is clearly given in programme and module handbooks. This was confirmed by students, who are complimentary and enthusiastic about the tutorial support they receive. Recorded feedback from tutorials is retained by the programme team, but can be seen by students on request.

2.36 The College emphasises student self-evaluation and critical reflection of formative feedback to enable greater creative and academic development. This contributes to, and engages students in, personal development planning (PDP) at all times throughout the duration of a programme, which supports their development of transferable skills and employability. Although not a wholly assessed component, elements of PDP, such as CVs, self-evaluations and evidence of planning are assessed. Students continually engage with this process, enabling them to monitor their progress and further their academic

development as they are regularly provided with opportunities to reflect on feedback and engage in dialogue with staff.

2.37 Students benefit from both internal and external collaborative projects. Internally, for example, BA (Hons) Costume Interpretation with Design students are working with students from BA (Hons) Production Design for Stage and Screen. Externally, industry visits, presence at trade shows and exhibitions, work-related assignments, entry to competitions and awards inform and enhance students' industry and skills-based knowledge both nationally and internationally. The College's Strategic Plan states that all higher education students will have the opportunity to undertake a live project by 2018, with individual programme targets being set. These, together with work experience and visiting speakers, are already features on most programmes. Overall, students found this aspect of their learning useful and enjoyable.

2.38 The College operates a peer observation of teaching scheme, which is aimed at encouraging academic staff to develop networks of peer support and to enable the sharing of good practice. No formal training is given to observers. Pairs of staff carry out peer observations within their own and across schools, and identify good practice and areas for improvement which are disseminated through presentations to peers, annual programme review meetings, informally among teams, cross-College and on the VLE. All staff are complimentary about the observation process and consider it to be constructively critical.

2.39 Reports from peer observations are considered by programme leaders and heads of school, who use these to inform individual performance management reviews. An annual report on the peer observation of teaching scheme is presented to the LTAC, which plans any further staff development required. This in turn is linked to the Performance Management Procedure, which is undertaken by programme leaders and heads of school to provide a formal and strategic process for monitoring the performance of staff and programmes.

2.40 The College's Strategic Plan, the Higher Education Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, and the Research and Scholarly Activity Strategy all iterate the focus on CPD of College staff, including enhanced qualifications, research, scholarly activity, and the monitoring of staff performance. The College employs a Staff Development and Scholarly Activity Procedure, which describes the processes through which staff can apply for support in training, staff development and scholarly activity. The introduction of a performance management system also identifies individual development needs and business requirements that meet strategic objectives.

2.41 All staff are allocated an annual number of hours for research and scholarly activity and are supported by a visiting fellow to help identify and develop research topics. The College encourages the many academic and support staff who are practising artists and designers to maintain and develop their own creative practice outside of the College, which informs their teaching practice. Academic staff are also encouraged to take part in roles as external examiners and external members of validation panels at other institutions. Good practice is shared at a research dissemination event and is also uploaded to the staff VLE under a discrete link. Staff appreciate and are enthusiastic about the support provided for their CPD, research and scholarly activity needs.

2.42 Following evaluation of the documentation provided and discussions with senior and teaching staff, it is clear that the support offered by the College to staff for personal development, research and scholarly activity is comprehensive and consistently applied. Staff continually praised the College in the many ways in which it supports them and were able to cite how they share research knowledge across programme teams, which informs their practice. The comprehensive support offered by the College to staff for personal development, research and scholarly activity is an example of **good practice**.

The MoU gives clear guidance to the College regarding the appointment of appropriately qualified higher education teaching staff. New members of staff follow an induction programme before being placed under the mentorship of their programme leader or relevant line manager, who is responsible for monitoring their introduction to their role and for performance management. All staff are expected to be qualified one level above that which they teach and hold or be working towards a teaching qualification. All new or significantly updated staff CVs are reviewed annually before the start of the academic year by AUB to ensure currency.

2.43 Employability is embedded throughout the curriculum with modules in professional practice included at all levels. These modules develop students' knowledge and understanding of the creative industries and how they operate. Students confirmed that they find these modules useful and enjoyable. The ILG supports the College and students by ensuring that the curriculum and resources available enable students to develop employability skills that are appropriate to the needs of industry. Through regular contact with programme teams, members of the ILG provide feedback for both academic staff and students regarding the content, currency, relevance and quality of work produced at each level. The Group has its own terms of reference and is convened by the Head of Employability and Enterprise. Recommendations from ILG are considered by the LTAC. The College is currently reviewing the way in which the ILG operates and how its membership can be more effective to the benefit of its students.

2.44 The Vice Principal Resources is responsible for all resources on higher education programmes. Resource allocation is governed by a curriculum resource model and forecasts of staff, materials and equipment needs are determined by heads of school and programme leaders. Bids for major items are received by the Vice Principal Resources from heads of school. Students contribute to the process through their Student Assemblies and Programme Boards of Study.

2.45 The College changed its VLE platform in 2013. This has resulted in a significant increase in use from both staff and students, as shown in the College's usage data and student surveys. The appointment of a Learning Technologist working in collaboration with students and staff to embed and develop the use of technology proactively is seen by the College as a positive step to enhance and support the student learning experience and to identify areas of good practice. The new platform provides access to specific programme and module information, guidance on academic study skills, academic support, academic services, student services, information on employability and enterprise, and College policies and procedures. Minimum content guidelines set threshold standards for programme content on the VLE and also identify areas of good practice and innovation across programmes. Staff and students consider the current VLE to be excellent, stating that it is easy to access and use, that it has had a positive effect on the curriculum, that it encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and that it has contributed to enhancement by way of shared learning.

2.46 The College has adapted its learning environment to different curriculum development needs. Apart from photography and film students, who have departmental base rooms, the College offers individual workspaces within a studio environment. Students have access to a wide range of specialist workshops and technical support staff to enable them to explore and experiment with a variety of techniques and processes. Additionally, the College has developed its student social spaces to promote informal learning. Students were able to give examples where requests for improved resources had been positively acted on by the College. Employers described their relationship with the College as very positive and confirmed that suggestions for resources to support students are met with an enthusiastic response.

2.47 The team confirms that the College meets, with low risk, the Expectation for working with their staff, students and other stakeholders to review, assure and enhance the quality of

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learning opportunities. Staff are supported by the College for personal development and scholarly activity that is comprehensive and consistently applied. Students confirmed their satisfaction with the learning resources available to them, and responses in the student perception questionnaire and national student surveys relating to staff and the quality of teaching at the College were largely positive and high.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement

Findings

2.48 As a strategic objective, the College is committed to the development of the quality of the student learning experience, and the development of skills for employment and enterprise in the creative industries. A wide range of measures are in place to enable the development and achievement of students.

2.49 The availability of resources and support mechanisms for students enables the Expectation to be met.

2.50 The review team tested the effectiveness of the arrangements and resources through the examination of documentation, the results of student surveys, scrutiny of the College VLE and meetings with teaching and support staff, students and employers.

2.51 The College tutorial system is supported by an Undergraduate Academic Tutorial Policy which details tutorial entitlement. This is also included in programme and module handbooks. The tutorial system is monitored and evaluated through annual monitoring and review processes that include student feedback. Students at risk are identified through the tutorial system, the monitoring of assessment outcomes and internal module boards. Students identified as requiring additional support are contacted by the Academic Support Team. Student perception surveys show that there is an 80 per cent level of satisfaction from students regarding the feedback and support and programme-related advice that they receive. This was confirmed by students during the review and also by the external examiner's report for BA (Hons) Photography 2013-14. The IQER in 2011 stated that the tutorial system was well embedded and the review team confirms this continuing practice.

2.52 Students undertake PDPs, which allows the development of transferable study skills. Guidelines for PDP are available for both academic staff and students. In consultation with staff, students at Levels 5 and 6 are able to draft their own learning agreement for a module. There is clear written guidance on learning agreements for both staff and students, along with learning agreement template forms.

2.53 The College-wide Student Services Team is the primary provider of information and guidance for students. Two full-time members of the team are based at the Hartlepool campus offering support for accommodation, finance and funding, disability, counselling, and specific learning difficulties. The team has links to a range of external advisers and maintains a database of contacts for more specialist advice. Students can access this service online through a dedicated portal on the VLE, by a contact link on the College's main website and by an open door policy.

2.54 Students applying to the College are supported in their transition to higher education by a series of activities including open days, presentations, visits and workshops. The extended study route preparatory year has been established to support those students coming from non-traditional art and design backgrounds and provides an additional progression route to higher education and preparation for undergraduate study. All new students participate in a timetabled induction week designed to introduce them to the College, the staff and the resources available for their programme, and the College as a whole. Complementing this, the College's Students' Union organises a Freshers' Week of social events. All new students are invited to be screened, using Lucid Adult Dyslexia Screening. Enrolment is monitored by Academic Services, and any students who require further support can arrange a meeting with a Student Services adviser.

2.55 The College identified through annual monitoring and review that there was a need to provide additional support for students in developing academic study skills. The College introduced an Academic Support Team in 2014 to provide study skills support outside the formal curriculum. This team provides taught sessions, seminars and tutorials. Additionally, and as a result of feedback from student and focus groups and from staff, the dedicated study skills area on the VLE is currently undergoing further development by the Academic Support Team.

2.56 The College promotes equality and diversity and has an Equality and Diversity Policy, which is monitored by the Equality and Diversity Committee and also the Safeguarding Committee. These are both chaired by the Vice Principal Academic and include representatives from all areas of the College, including students. Their terms of reference are clearly articulated. The Vice Principal Academic is leading the development of the Safeguarding Learners Policy to promote the welfare of students. This policy is currently under review in order to align it with the national Prevent Strategy.

2.57 At the start of 2015-16, the College replaced its internal Module Board with interim examination boards to review the outcomes of module summative assessments. The interim examination boards meet with the purpose of considering the spread of marks and to confirm that staff have been compliant with assessment procedures. This has led to good academic debate, particularly across classification boundaries and mitigation. It has also enabled the supportive process for students identified at risk to be actioned and confirmed.

2.58 The College operates an Undergraduate Mitigation Policy, which is used to offer students extensions on assessment deadlines. Applications for extensions of more than one week are considered by an impartial Mitigation Panel, which is comprised of the relevant head of school, a member of Registry and a member of support staff, who look at cases on an individual basis. All decisions made by the Mitigation Panel meetings are reviewed on an annual basis by a meeting of the Mitigation Board.

2.59 The College has a range of assistive technologies available on student computers and a wide range of specialist accommodation, equipment and technologies to enable students to develop their creative and professional practice. Within the studio-based programmes students are provided with their own individual work bays, which encourages students to take responsibility for their own work areas and creates a realistic studio environment. This was commended in the external examiner's report for Graphic Communication, 2014-15 and is greatly appreciated by students.

2.60 The College's VLE provides flexible access for all students both on and off the campus and ease of use in connecting with mobile devices. The content of the VLE includes learning materials required for individual programmes and general College information relating to regulations, policies and procedures, services, facilities and resources. The College provides a Student Guide to Undergraduate Regulations booklet on the Academic Services area of the VLE, which helps students to understand College policies. Other features include weblinks to resources, notification of events, a Student Services chat facility, and an academic staff portal. A number of recent improvements have been made to the VLE, including the addition of anti-plagiarism software, the facility for online digital submissions, the provision of electronic feedback to students, and access to information and sample dissertations for external examiners. Students and staff praised the VLE and are enthusiastic about using it. It has also been commended in an external survey for its design.

2.61 The College's library contains a range of specialist art and design resources in both traditional and electronic formats. All students receive a library induction and are kept up to date with new additions in a biannual newsletter. They are also provided with a subject-specific resource guide followed by an information skills and e-learning session. The library resources are catalogued electronically on the library management system, available online (VLE or portal) or within the library. AUB's evaluation of the College's library resources in 2012 identified the absence of critical texts in both specific taught disciplines and secondary

and supporting subjects, and a lack of advanced-level technical and professional material in some subject areas. The College responded with the appointment of a Higher Education Library Development Manager responsible for the Collection Development Policy. Currently in draft form, this new policy, due for implementation in 2016, sets out basic principles for the selection, acquisition, evaluation and development of the library's print, audiovisual and electronic resources. Internal and nationally conducted surveys indicate positive student feedback regarding the College's library service. This was confirmed by students, who are positive about and appreciative of the support they receive from the library service and its staff, whom they cite as being helpful and knowledgeable.

2.62 The College enables students to reflect on and evaluate their own progress by displaying the progress and outcomes of student work. The final year shows allow graduating students to showcase their creative and professional development to the public. Students also have the opportunity to participate in a range of external events regionally and nationally, including exhibiting at Graduate Fashion Week, New Designers and Free Range, and are actively collaborating with other institutions in joint projects. Students also benefit from residential or non-residential educational visits and a range of visiting speakers.

2.63 Employability is a key component of all programmes and the College recognises it as a strategic imperative. The establishment of a dedicated unit, Folio, has seen a consistent rise in student involvement with the services it provides. Working with local, regional and national employers, Folio has been welcomed by students, who greatly value this facility. Collaborative working between Folio and programme teams, as well as College support services, ensures that students are best prepared for work experience and employment. This fully integrated and effective approach to employability that ensures students are prepared for professional practice in the creative industries is an example of **good practice**.

2.64 Overall, the College has in place, monitors and evaluates a wide range of resources and support services and opportunities for students to develop their potential. Therefore the team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement

Findings

2.65 The College Strategic Plan 2015-18 acknowledges the importance of student involvement in quality assurance. It identifies as a value 'Student engagement within the learning environment as a partnership with staff to aid delivery of a high quality student experience'. The role of students in quality assurance and the significance of student feedback is also highlighted in the Higher Education Quality Policy. The College uses the National Student Survey (NSS), Student Perception Survey and Module Evaluation Surveys as methods of gathering student feedback, in addition to student assemblies and programme boards of study.

2.66 Student feedback is considered at a number of formal meetings and is acted upon. The action taken in response to feedback is provided to students directly through student assemblies and programme boards of study. The students are actively involved in the quality assurance and enhancement of their educational experience and the College acknowledges their importance. This would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.67 The review team tested the Expectation by meeting staff and students and by examination of the College's key policy documents relating to quality and engagement of students, the Undergraduate Student Charter, minutes of relevant meetings and student assemblies, and the student submission and relevant sections of the self-evaluation document.

2.68 Students recognise the use and purpose of the Module Evaluation Surveys, Student Perception Surveys and National Student Surveys. Student responses to surveys are collected online and analysed centrally by Academic Services, and used by programme teams to inform programme monitoring and review through module leaders' reports and APR reports.

2.69 In response to student feedback regarding the Student Representative System, the College has taken the strategic approach to introduce the role of a Student Liaison Officer who was appointed in January 2015. This role acts as a conduit between students and staff at the College. This is being implemented by the development of the Higher Education Student Engagement Policy.

2.70 The College has a Students' Union with elected officers, which covers both further education and higher education provision. Each member is elected on the VLE, which is accessible to all students and staff. Student representatives are provided with formal training and they confirmed that they feel supported in their roles. Feedback from the training in October 2015 led to the development of the student engagement area of the VLE.

2.71 Students are represented on the Governing Body at the Corporation Board meetings. Students confirmed that three students have recently been invited to attend the LTAC, Higher Education Quality and Academic Standards Committee and Information Learning Technology Committee. The review team therefore **affirms** the steps being taken to involve students in all quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms.

2.72 Student assemblies are held twice a year and are conducted as an open discussion between students to provide their views on all aspects of their experience. The College has scheduled the assemblies strategically to be considered by programme leaders in advance of programme boards of study. The student assemblies have set agendas that allow tutors and student representatives to provide updates on student feedback and report on actions

taken in response to previous feedback. This provides a direct line of communication for informing students. Actions arising from student assemblies are entered onto template forms by programme leaders and are circulated to student representatives to feed back to the student body.

2.73 Programme boards of study meet twice a year and involve both students and staff to review and speak about their views on the development of programmes. The APR reports, action plans, summaries of external examiners' reports and feedback from students are considered in these meetings. Following the meeting it is the responsibility of the programme leader to update the Student Assembly Actions Arising and Outcomes form, which is then passed on to students.

2.74 At present, external examiner reports are not widely available for all students but are provided to student representatives at programme boards of study as described above. The College is currently developing external examiner report summaries to be made available on the VLE in the future.

2.75 The College ensures continued student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement at various levels across programmes. Students are actively engaged, encouraged and supported by programme staff to provide feedback. This feedback is collected through a range of scheduled surveys and student assemblies with the outcome relayed back to students in a timely manner. These processes encourage open dialogue between staff and students and therefore the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.76 AUB approve learning outcomes and assessment criteria during validation processes. Assessment of student work, including moderation, standardisation, and feedback, is the responsibility of the College. The URF and Assessment regulations are available on the Academic Services area of the VLE and further explanation is available in the Student Guide to Undergraduate Regulations. The learning outcomes and assessment criteria are scrutinised during the validation process with AUB to ensure that these are appropriately aligned.

2.77 The APCL/APEL procedure is managed through the Academic Registry with the decision to approve claims resting with the Vice Principal Academic as chair of the HE Q&AS Committee. The APCL/APEL procedure is made available to applicants on the College website, through the policies and procedures webpage, and to staff on the intranet.

2.78 The review team examined a range of documentation to test how the processes operate in practice. This includes the self-evaluation document, the student submission, external examiners' reports and Higher Education Quality Policy. The team met senior and academic staff, professional support staff, and students.

2.79 Programme handbooks ensure that students know where to access assessment and related processes. This information is also available on the staff intranet and on the external examiners' VLE.

2.80 Module handbooks are produced to a standard template and provide assessment schedules for submission, formative and summative feedback. Staff are issued with guidance on module marking criteria, which are also included in module handbooks for students. The criteria are mapped to the 'notched' grading system devised by the degree-awarding body and this is used to guide staff further in writing summative feedback that aligns appropriately with the grade. Guidance on the conventions of academic writing, avoidance of plagiarism and correct referencing during teaching sessions is available on the study skills area of the VLE. The ESR preparatory year does not carry credit but a pass or fail grade is awarded for the first two modules with an indicative mark to demonstrate level of achievement being awarded for the third module, if a student successfully completes the year.

2.81 Assessment is scheduled to ensure manageable workloads for students and staff and that students are given feedback in time to benefit subsequent modules. Summative feedback is given within four weeks of the summative assessment deadline. Staff use summative assessment to 'feed forward' into subsequent modules and the feedback comments on achievement against learning outcomes to give students a clear idea of where they need to improve. Percentage marks are used for each module and the calculations used for progression and final awards are made clear to students.

2.82 The design of assessment tasks enables students to respond in a range of ways dependent on their specialist route, enabling an individual creative response. Practical work is submitted to academic staff, and students are required to complete and sign an assessment submission form. Written work and portfolios may be submitted digitally through the VLE, where feedback can be given securely.

2.83 New staff are introduced to marking through working with a more experienced member of staff. Guidance on double-marking and moderation is outlined in the URF and Assessment Regulations, is moderated through Summative Assessment and Moderation Records and verified before submission to the Academic Registry.

2.84 The Academic Registry stores all marks and for examination boards all information is supplied by the AUB Registry. The transparency and rigour of the moderation process has been highlighted by external examiners as good practice. Examination Boards are held at the College to ratify module assessment outcomes, and PABs at AUB to confirm decisions on progression and awards. The College is represented at AUB PABs by a senior member of staff, such as the Head of HE Q&AS, Head of School or Academic Registrar.

2.85 The College's Academic Registrar emails all students a username and password to access individual results online one month before they are published. Once the results are published the Academic Registry sends out retake assignment briefs to students who have been offered the opportunity to retrieve failed modules. Academic appeals must be made to the College Academic Registrar within 15 working days of the publication of results.

2.86 The annual assessment standardisation exercise, which was commended during the 2011 IQER, was updated in 2014-15 and now focuses on the Level 6 final major project at a point before the results have progressed to exam boards. An academic observer from AUB attends. There are plans to improve this process further during 2015-16.

2.87 Student satisfaction with assessment ranges from 82 per cent to 89 per cent satisfaction in internal surveys, and an overall score of 83 per cent in the NSS.

2.88 The College has an appropriate regulatory framework and associated processes for the assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning. The review team concludes that Expectation B6 is met in both design and operation and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining

Findings

2.89 External examiners are nominated by the College and approved, appointed and trained by the awarding body. Their roles and responsibilities are clearly articulated in AUB's Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook and the criteria mirror the Quality Code (*Chapter B7*). External examiners assure AUB that academic standards are being met and provide external reference points during programme monitoring and review processes.

2.90 The processes in place at the College would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.91 The team tested the effectiveness of the arrangements and resources by considering a range of documentation relating to external examining. It also met senior and teaching staff and students from the College and an AUB representative.

2.92 The College values the views and comments from external examiners, whose feedback is used to inform the development, monitoring and review of each programme. The College takes action on any recommendations made to resolve issues and make improvements relating to academic standards.

2.93 Nominations for external examiners are made by the College and forwarded to AUB. Approval is based on criteria set out in the AUB Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook, which details policies and regulations governing the nomination and appointment of external examiners.

2.94 Newly appointed external examiners are provided with an induction by AUB, which introduces them to procedures, regulations and an overview of their role and responsibilities. The College provides external examiners with information packs, including summative module mark sheets and moderation records. Access to samples of student work is also provided in accordance with the quality assurance guidelines. In advance of an external examiner's visit, the Head of HE Q&AS at the College issues programme teams with a guidance pack, which includes a standardised template and an outline timetable for the visit. This also details the information required to be sent to the external examiner prior to, or given during, their visit. Additionally, information is provided by the College for external examiners in a dedicated area on the VLE. The name and institution of a programme's external examiner is included in the programme specification. The way in which the College manages visits has been praised by several external examiners.

2.95 Normally, each programme has its own external examiner but occasionally an examiner will be required to work across two related disciplines, for example BA (Hons) Graphic Design and Communication and BA (Hons) Illustration for Commercial Application. From the group of external examiners one is nominated and appointed chief external examiner. AUB conducts an induction programme for chief external examiners to clarify their role in ensuring parity of standards and processes across all programmes. They are also required to attend awarding body progression and award boards, and College examinations boards. The chief external examiner is responsible for meeting with all other external examiners from the College and for producing a summary report derived from all programme external examiners' reports. This is discussed with AUB and forms part of the College's annual review process. External examiners' reports are also discussed at programme boards of study and with students.

2.96 External examiner reports are received by the Chair of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee of the awarding body. These are forwarded to the College's Vice Principal Academic and the Head of HE Q&AS. Reports are circulated in the College by the

Academic Registry to heads of school and to the appropriate programme leader, who is responsible for including any comments in annual programme review reports. These reports are considered by the College's HE Q&AS Committee and once the APR reports are confirmed, it is the responsibility of the programme leader to respond to the external examiner with details of how any issues are to be addressed.

2.97 External examiners' reports are discussed with student representatives at programme boards of study, but the College has acknowledged that they have not been made widely available to the whole student body. However, the College is considering taking steps to improve this by uploading a summary of each external examiner report to the VLE. Students are made aware of external examiners and their role in ensuring standards at induction and throughout their programme by staff who refer to a report's outcomes and its impact on their teaching. Students have the opportunity to meet external examiners and recognise their importance, stating that it gives them confidence in programme standards.

2.98 The team considers that the College has robust processes in place for receiving, considering and responding to external examiner reports. Communication between the College, its awarding body and external examiners is strong, complementing awarding body regulations and processes. The team therefore concludes that Expectation B7 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review

Findings

2.99 In 2013-14 the College evaluated its higher education provision against the Expectations of the Quality Code and realigned review processes to those outlined in the AUB Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook. The Undergraduate APR and AOR Procedure is regarded by the College as a key feature in an annual cycle to support maintenance and improvement in the quality of provision.

2.100 Summaries of the external examiners' reports for each programme, together with annual reports on student services, enhancement, student engagement, student complaints and academic appeals form the basis of the College's AOR, which is submitted to AUB's LTQ for consideration. The AOR action plan, which is monitored through the College HE Q&AS Committee, provides a focus for quality improvement over the following year.

2.101 The College has developed a draft Undergraduate Programme Closure Procedure identifying the factors and criteria for closure of a programme and the measures to be put in place to protect the academic interests of students. This was presented to the AP Committee in November 2015 prior to being submitted to the AUB LTQ. Academic staff were able to describe the process that takes place currently, which ensures that students are accommodated adequately as their programme is taken to closure.

2.102 The College's review and monitoring processes have recently been evaluated and aligned with AUB processes. The processes and their effective implementation would allow Expectation B8 to be met, providing a coherent cyclical process for the maintenance of academic standards and the assurance and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities.

2.103 The review team examined a range of documentation to test how the College's processes operate in practice. This includes the self-evaluation document, student submission, external examiners' reports, Higher Education Quality Policy, and minutes from Academic Board, Principalship and Corporation Board of the governing body. The team met senior staff, academic staff, students and employers.

2.104 In order to identify areas in need of improvement and good practice worthy of sharing, Quality Indicator Packs are compiled for each programme. They contain a range of documents in addition to external examiner reports, feedback from employers, NSS data and module leaders' reports. Quality indicators are analysed to identify any weakness that may lead to a cause for concern trigger, in line with the AUB process. The College is working to refine this relatively new process to ensure action is directed to more specific areas in need of attention.

2.105 APR meetings for each programme are attended by academic and technical staff and run to a standard agenda, which includes presentation of a SWOT analysis, consideration of module leaders' reports, and feedback from students and external examiners. In addition, teams are provided with guidance notes on potential areas of risk to facilitate discussions that lead to an action plan identifying areas for improvement for the following year. AUB quality assurance processes require that APR reports are cross-read and evaluative feedback provided using a standard template. The cross-read APR reports are reviewed by the College's Head of HE Q&AS before consideration at a meeting of the HE Q&AS Committee, which is also attended by a senior representative of AUB. Any causes

for concern about individual programmes identified by the Head of HE Q&AS are reported to the November HE Q&AS Committee.

2.106 The College includes as many staff and students in this process as possible in order to develop, improve and enhance the quality of learning opportunities by addressing weaknesses and through the identification and sharing of good practice. Implementation of the AUB risk-based process ensures greater alignment of practice across programmes delivered at the main AUB campus and CCAD. Roles and responsibilities are clearly identified.

2.107 Programme monitoring and review processes are applied systematically and operated consistently. The College reviews the learning experience and drives improvements to the student experience. As a result, the review team concludes that Expectation B8 is met in both design and operation and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

Findings

2.108 The College shares responsibilities with AUB for student academic appeals. Academic appeals are made to the College initially but if a student remains dissatisfied, they have a final right of appeal to AUB. The University Academic Board receives an annual report on the academic appeals submitted.

2.109 The College has sole responsibility for student complaints. The policies relating to both academic appeals and complaints are set out clearly and are made accessible to both students and staff. There are clear timescales for procedures, which are robustly implemented. The procedures demonstrate fairness as the final decision includes the rationale used to inform the decision. The steps taken to implement the policies and procedures relating to academic appeals and student complaints would allow Expectation B9 to be met.

2.110 The review team tested the Expectation by speaking to staff and students and reading the Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure, the Undergraduate Student Complaints Procedure, student submission and relevant sections of the self-evaluation document. The review team also scrutinised the College VLE.

2.111 The College has an Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure and Undergraduate Student Complaints Procedure, which have both been revised to align with AUB policies. The Complaints Procedure identifies that one purpose of the Procedure is to ensure that complaints are conducted in a timely and fair manner and are accessible to students.

2.112 The College is able to distinguish separate procedures for complaints and academic appeals respectively and issues are often resolved informally due to a willingness to explain the rationale for decisions and a willingness to resolve issues. Initial discussions are not formally recorded and students are advised on how they are able to make an appeal or complaint. When lodging a complaint, a student is directed to the College's Student Services Manager. If making an academic appeal, a student is directed to speak to the Academic Registrar who reviews the grounds of appeal. Students are also able to raise concerns with their student representatives and in forums such as student assemblies and programme boards of study.

2.113 The Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure and Undergraduate Student Complaints Procedure, together with relevant guidance notes, are available on the Academic Services area of the VLE, and on the staff intranet. The guides are easily accessed and are very detailed. The students are aware of the procedures and where to find information on both processes and are happy to ask staff for further information.

2.114 The effectiveness of the two procedures is monitored and evaluated as part of annual monitoring and review in the Annual Overview Report, which is approved by the College's Academic Board before submission to the chair of AUB's LTQ.

2.115 The College operates effective academic appeals and complaints processes, which are monitored and implemented fairly. There is detailed guidance readily available for both staff and students, which allows the process to be accessible. Therefore the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

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

Findings

2.116 A strategic priority of the College is to place increasing emphasis on high quality creative sector employer links and to increase the range and quality of student opportunities for work experience and live projects during their programme of study.

2.117 The policies and procedures in place at the College would enable this Expectation to be met.

2.118 The review team considered a range of documents and information relating to working with other organisations and employers. The team met employers (many of whom have a longstanding relationship with the College), staff responsible for employer engagement, and students.

2.119 The Undergraduate Work Experience Policy and the Work Experience Handbook clearly define the roles, responsibilities, processes, duties and the monitoring of students, staff and work experience providers. These documents also provide students with a complete overview of how their work experience operates and its relationship to their learning and personal development. Forms requiring completion before and after a work experience takes place are available on the Employability and Enterprise area of the VLE. Employers confirmed that they are required to complete health and safety forms and receive guidance notes from the College. Students are aware of the Work Experience Handbook but stated that they obtain most of the information required either directly from the work experience provider, from the Head of Employability and Enterprise or from the VLE. The College has acknowledged that there is a variety of practice in the completion of documentation for work experience and the records that are kept by programme teams and is working to improve this. Students recognise the importance of work experience and appreciate the benefits these bring in developing their creative and professional practice.

2.120 The College works in collaboration with a range of external partners to provide students with visiting lecturers, speakers and alumni who are identified by teaching teams to contribute to the enhancement of programmes. Invitations are submitted for approval to the Head of Employability and Enterprise, who maintains a discrete budget and oversight of visiting professionals who may contribute to the development and membership of the ILG. More recently the College has engaged with other academic institutions in collaborative projects with a specific focus on widening participation. This has enabled students to develop their creative practice and provides staff with the opportunity to share good practice.

2.121 Work experience is not a prerequisite of the College's undergraduate programmes. However, every student has the opportunity to participate in work experience during their studies and it is actively encouraged and promoted by staff. Work experience opportunities can be identified by academic staff based on the programme's external contacts, by using the College's Centre for Employability and Enterprise, Folio's existing contacts and its active prospecting for new opportunities, and by students themselves as a result of individual research and investigation. In addition to support from academic staff, Folio supports students in finding and securing work experience. It also arranges workshops for CV preparation, sourcing any funding required, and preparation for self-employment including self-promotion.

2.122 Work experience is not assessed but programme leaders can agree to include work arising from it in assessment where it is clear that it falls within the scope of the curriculum and meets the requirements of the module learning outcomes. Across programmes, there are differing strategies in place to ensure that students are not disadvantaged when they undertake work experience during term time. Programme handbooks and module handbooks include some information for students about this but the information is unclear and inconsistently presented. The review team **recommends** that the College provides clear guidance to all students on the strategies in place to support the completion of an academic module while on work experience.

2.123 Students are also provided with the opportunity for educational visits, which are planned and organised by academic staff. These too are highly valued by the students.

2.124 The College has effective processes that underpin the management of work experience and learning experiences facilitated by external parties. The team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*

Findings

2.125 The College does not currently deliver research degrees.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.131 In reaching its judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.132 Of the 10 applicable expectations, all are met with low risk judgements throughout.

2.133 There are two features of good practice linked in particular to learning opportunities: for Expectation B3, the comprehensive support offered to staff for personal development and scholarly activity; and for Expectations B4 and B10, the fully integrated and effective approach to employability that ensures students are prepared for professional practice in the creative industries. The section also contributes to Enhancement in the strategic approach of the College to the development of a shared ethos of continuous improvement, empowering staff and enabling students to realise their full potential. One affirmation is included, which recognises the steps being taken to include students in all quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms.

2.134 The team also made one recommendation regarding the provision of clear guidance to all students on the strategies in place to support the completion of an academic module while on work placement. Across programmes, there are differing strategies in place to ensure that students are not disadvantaged when they undertake work experience during term time. Programme handbooks and module handbooks include some information for students about this but the information could be presented more clearly to ensure that students fully understand the process.

2.135 On the basis of the documentation provided and meetings with staff and students, the team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at Cleveland College of Art and Design **meets** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The College prospectus provides, in hard copy and on the website, details about the programmes it offers, the application process and entry requirements. The MoU with AUB sets out the terms for publicity and use of AUB's name and logos. It stipulates that AUB normally reviews publicity materials once annually between January and March and handbooks once annually between June and August. AUB reserves the right to review all publicity and materials relating to its awards prior to publication. The MoU also deals with intellectual property, learning and teaching materials and student data.

3.2 All policies and procedures are made available to staff and students on the intranet and the VLE. The information is fit for purpose and procedures are rigorously implemented. This would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.3 The review team tested the quality of information about learning opportunities by examining the College's website and VLE alongside relevant policies and procedures, and minutes of committees with responsibility for information. Details of procedures, systems and accessibility of information were discussed in meetings with academic and professional support staff, a representative from AUB, employers and students.

3.4 The Marketing Team, Student Recruitment Team and Admissions Team all have clearly defined roles for producing marketing materials, carrying out recruitment activities and administering the admissions process respectively. The staff are well aware of their responsibilities and requirements within these defined roles.

3.5 A variety of documents and materials are made available for College staff on the intranet, including the AUB Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook and the College's Higher Education Quality Policy. All make suitable reference to external reference points, including the Quality Code.

3.6 The prospectus is updated and published annually and is the responsibility of the Marketing Manager, who works in conjunction with the Principalship, the degree-awarding body, heads of school, and programme leaders to ensure accuracy. Students have input to the design of the prospectus and the website through focus groups conducted with the Marketing Manager.

3.7 Students confirmed their frequent use of the VLE and its benefit for the study of their programmes. It makes available module handbooks and timetable information as well as policies, procedures and regulations for students in an Academic Services area that includes assessment regulations, academic dishonesty, appeals and complaints, mitigation, attendance and academic tutorials, the Undergraduate Student Charter and Undergraduate College Regulations.

3.8 Overall, information published for the public, prospective and current students, and staff is fit for purpose, trustworthy and accurate. Students and staff make thorough use of the VLE and module handbooks and the team concludes that the Expectation in part C is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

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

3.9 In reaching its judgement about the quality of information about learning opportunities, the team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.10 The College provides information about its higher education provision for prospective and current students, employers, staff, and public stakeholders, and for those with responsibility for maintaining standards and assuring quality. Information is accessible, appropriate and accurate.

3.11 No recommendations or good practice points relate to this area.

3.12 On the basis of the documentation provided, and discussions with staff and students, the team concludes that the College provides information that is fit for purpose, trustworthy and accessible and in so doing Cleveland College of Art and Design **meets** UK expectations for the quality of information about learning opportunities.

4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1 The College Strategic Plan sets out key objectives and targets that reference enhancement and continuing improvement through excellence in learning, teaching and assessment, and enhancing student employability. All College strategies and operational plans are mapped to strategic objectives to provide a clear focus and direction for development. In 2013, the College undertook a full review and assessment of its policies and procedures to clarify the operational framework.

4.2 The AUB Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook provides a framework for quality assurance and enhancement referenced to the Quality Code. Action plans are reviewed through the College committee structures, the Principalship, Academic Board, and Corporation Board of the governing body.

4.3 Annual monitoring and review provide staff with opportunities to reflect on provision and consider improvement and enhancement activity. Resulting actions are monitored through programme boards of study and the HE Q&AS Committee.

4.4 The HELT&AS document sets out a number of aims that have been identified as the means by which the enhancement of learning opportunities can be achieved across all higher education programmes.

4.5 The Staff Development and Scholarly Activity procedure is updated annually to reflect priorities in line with the Strategic Plan. In addition, the College has put in place a Research and Scholarly Activity Strategy (R&SA) to encourage a research-active culture and support individual creative and academic practice. To support this culture, the teaching hours of academic staff have been realigned to enable engagement in research, as well as scholarly activity. The College also provides funding for staff to study for higher degrees, attend national and international conferences and to become fellows of the Higher Education Academy and other professional bodies.

4.6 The strategic importance of employability is articulated in the College's mission statement and is underpinned by strategic objectives in the strategic plan. The Employability and Enterprise Strategy recognises the importance of preparing students well for employment and that all academic staff are aware of the need for strong and credible industry links.

4.7 The College shows its commitment to enhancing learning opportunities, to ensure that continuous improvement is embedded at both strategic and operational level, enabling it to meet the Enhancement Expectation.

4.8 The review team examined a range of documentation to test how the College's processes for enhancing learning opportunities operate in practice. This includes the self-evaluation document, student submission, external examiners' reports and minutes from Academic Board, Principalship and Corporation Board of the governing body. The team met the Head of Provider, senior staff, academic staff, professional support staff, students and employers.

4.9 There has been significant investment in the higher education campus, its resources and facilities. The College has built effective partnerships with the student body and external stakeholders, such as AUB, and has revised committee governance with a restructuring of management to create higher education-specific structures and create additional supportive roles.

4.10 In addition to meeting the expectations set out in the AUB Higher Education Quality Assurance Handbook, the College has instigated activity including internal scrutiny meetings prior to validation and periodic review events to further refine, review and improve the process. Academic Board, the Principalship and the Corporation Board of the governing body review Key Performance Indicators such as retention, progression and achievement to monitor progress and inform action planning.

4.11 The College states an intention to empower and involve academic and support staff in enhancement through their involvement in higher education academic committees. Staff confirm that their involvement promotes a shared understanding of and ownership of strategic aims and actions arising from the AOR and provides valuable opportunities to share good practice.

4.12 Guidance given in AUB templates for annual monitoring and periodic review prompts staff to consider improvements and enhancements. Industry engagement is drawn on by staff to ensure curriculum currency.

4.13 Staff development was highlighted as good practice in the IQER Summative Review report of 2011. In 2015-16 emphasis has been placed on higher level qualifications, research and vocational activities. Research and scholarly activity is becoming firmly embedded and the evaluation of the impact on the student experience more fully established. Emerging strategies and processes, including a supportive structure linking CPD and performance management to the enhancement of learning, teaching and assessment, are being implemented to provide a coherent and effective structure for enhancement.

4.14 A range of networks and forums promote the exchange and dissemination of good practice and encourage innovative approaches. These include staff development days, staff portal, APR cross-reading, assessment standardisation events and interaction with external organisations and initiatives such as the involvement of the College's Learning Technologist in the national Changing the Learning Landscape initiative.

4.15 There are a number of ways in which the College undertakes to develop employability and transferable skills, including staff who are practitioners, live briefs, professional studies modules, and opportunities to exhibit work at national and international trade shows such as the Festival of Illustration in 2015. The College uses the umbrella brand of CCAD Creative, launched in 2014-15, for this range of extracurricular activities.

4.16 All students have the opportunity to engage in work experience but it is not a compulsory element of any programme. The Head of Employability and Enterprise oversees the range of experiences and contacts that connect students to the creative industries under the Folio brand. The College has ambitions to continue to develop the effectiveness of this activity. The College aims to maintain the current level of 96 per cent graduate employment or further study by continuing to monitor data collated six months after graduating.

4.17 A significant example of enhancement through annual monitoring and review is the development of specific strategies to support transition, progression, retention and achievement, particularly for Level 4 students. This resulted in the appointment of the Progression Tutor and Admissions Tutor. The College is actively addressing the need to further engage students in quality assurance and enhancement activities.

4.18 The College has strongly demonstrated a strategic approach to enhancement which has developed a shared ethos of continuous improvement, empowering staff and enabling students to realise their full potential. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Enhancement Expectation is **commended** in both design and operation and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.19 In reaching its judgement about the enhancement of learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against criteria specified within the Quality Code, summarised in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.20 The Expectation for this judgement area is met and the associated level of risk is low. There was one feature of good practice regarding the strategic approach to enhancement, which has developed a shared ethos of continuous improvement, empowering staff and enabling students to reach their full potential. There are also links made between Enhancement and Expectation B3 in the comprehensive support offered to staff for personal development and scholarly activity.

4.21 On the basis of the documentation provided, meetings with staff and students, and the deliberate steps being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities, the review team concludes that the enhancement of learning opportunities at the College is **commended** and the Expectation is met.

5 Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1 The College recognises employability with strategic importance. Its mission statement, the Strategic Plan and the Higher Education Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy all underpin this strategic objective.

5.2 In recent years, the College's focus on employability for its higher education students has meant that it has had to re-evaluate its position in order to enhance the quality of learning experiences. It has achieved this by ensuring that its students have the best opportunities to establish themselves as professional practitioners in employment or further study, and that the College meets the needs of local, regional and national employers with skilled and employable graduates.

5.3 Led by the Head of Employability and Enterprise, in 2014-15 the College launched Folio, an umbrella brand of CCAD Creative. This has been established to provide extracurricular support, activities, facilities, services, one-to-one mentoring, PDP support, mock interviews, enterprise advice and information that is accessible to all students, including a dedicated area on the VLE. The Employability and Enterprise Strategy has subsequently been developed, which sets out how the service aims to enhance the quality and industrial relevance of the College's undergraduate provision in the context of its strategic objectives.

5.4 Surveys taken by the College show significant increases in the number of students accessing the service and that those who do so feel more prepared for employment or further study. Folio also offers an ongoing advice and mentoring service to alumni. The College has invested heavily in the service that Folio provides, which is fully integrated in the curriculum of all programmes. Analysis undertaken in house of the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey, at both College and programme levels and compared with national data, indicates the very positive impact on students' employability prospects, graduate employment and progression to further study that Folio has made, and students highly praise the services that it provides.

5.5 Under its own Terms of Reference, the ILG supports the College in the many ways previously described. Regular contact with programme teams ensures currency and relevance of all programmes. Convened by the Head of Employability and Enterprise, recommendations from ILG are considered by the LTAC. The College is currently reviewing the way in which the ILG operates and how its membership can benefit students more effectively.

5.6 Operating under the Undergraduate Work Experience Policy, all students have the opportunity to participate in work experience during their period of undergraduate study at the College. Opportunities also exist for students to exhibit work alongside professionals at regional, national and international trade shows and exhibitions, final year shows and viewings for film screenings. Employers are involved in the delivery and development of programmes and are used to inform the design of assignment briefs and to provide live briefs and projects. Networking events provide further opportunities for students to meet practitioners and potential employers. The College also works in partnership with the Hartlepool Art Gallery, local authorities and local community groups.

5.7 The majority of academic and technical support staff are, or have been, specialist creative practitioners maintaining and developing their contacts and subject currency through their own freelance work and/or exhibitions. Teaching staff are actively encouraged to update their creative practice through the development of research opportunities supported by the College. Teaching staff are well supported in maintaining and developing their professional and industrial links in order to monitor and review the currency of their programmes and to enhance the student experience. They are also active in providing

students with work-related learning opportunities such as exhibitions and trade shows, live projects, work experience contacts, educational visits, and a programme of visiting lecturers and speakers.

5.8 Technical and studio-based practice skills are developed through high levels of contact time with academic tutors and technician demonstrators across all programmes and workshop areas, and this has been complimented by external examiners.

5.9 Professional studies modules, tailored to requirements depending on the sector, are common to all programmes and are integral to the development of professional practice and employability. These modules enable students to develop their understanding of their specialist creative sector. The embedding and delivery of employability skills in the curriculum has been identified as good practice by several external examiners. Students stated that they found this element of their studies useful and enjoyable.

5.10 As highlighted throughout this report, the team found clear evidence that the College has well developed strategies and effective practices embedded for developing and promoting employability skills and the professional development of its students.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 30-33 of the [Higher Education Review handbook](#)

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

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

Academic standards

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

Award

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

Blended learning

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

Credit(s)

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

Degree-awarding body

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

Distance learning

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

Dual award or double award

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

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Enhancement

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

Expectations

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

Flexible and distributed learning

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.

See also **distance learning**.

Framework

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

Framework for higher education qualifications

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

Good practice

A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

Learning opportunities

The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcomes

What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

Multiple awards

An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

Operational definition

A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

Programme (of study)

An approved programme of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Programme specifications

Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

Public information

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

Quality Code

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

Reference points

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

Subject Benchmark Statement

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

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard

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

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

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

Widening participation

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

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