University of East Anglia

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Institutional audit

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Preface

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (the Agency) exists to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education (HE) qualifications and to encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of HE.

To do this the Agency carries out reviews of individual HE institutions (universities and colleges of HE). In England and Northern Ireland this process is known as institutional audit. The Agency operates similar but separate processes in Scotland and Wales.

The purpose of institutional audit

The aims of institutional audit are to meet the public interest in knowing that universities and colleges are:
- providing HE, awards and qualifications of an acceptable quality and an appropriate academic standard; and
- exercising their legal powers to award degrees in a proper manner.

Judgements

Institutional audit results in judgements about the institutions being reviewed. Judgements are made about:
- the **confidence** that can reasonably be placed in the soundness of the institution's present and likely future management of the quality of its programmes and the academic standards of its awards;
- the **reliance** that can reasonably be placed on the accuracy, integrity, completeness and frankness of the information that the institution publishes, and about the quality of its programmes and the standards of its awards.

These judgements are expressed as either **broad confidence**, **limited confidence** or **no confidence** and are accompanied by examples of good practice and recommendations for improvement.

Nationally agreed standards

Institutional audit uses a set of nationally agreed reference points, known as the 'academic infrastructure', to consider an institution's standards and quality. These are published by the Agency and consist of:
- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (*FHEQ*), which include descriptions of different HE qualifications;
- The *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*;
- subject benchmark statements, which describe the characteristics of degrees in different subjects;
- guidelines for preparing programme specifications, which are descriptions of the what is on offer to students in individual programmes of study. They outline the intended knowledge, skills, understanding and attributes of a student completing that programme. They also give details of teaching and assessment methods and link the programme to the FHEQ.

The audit process

Institutional audits are carried out by teams of academics who review the way in which institutions oversee their academic quality and standards. Because they are evaluating their equals, the process is called 'peer review'.

The main elements of institutional audit are:
- a preliminary visit by the Agency to the institution nine months before the audit visit;
- a self-evaluation document submitted by the institution four months before the audit visit;
- a written submission by the student representative body, if they have chosen to do so, four months before the audit visit;
- a detailed briefing visit to the institution by the audit team five weeks before the audit visit;
- the audit visit, which lasts five days;
- the publication of a report on the audit team's judgements and findings 20 weeks after the audit visit.

The evidence for the audit

In order to obtain the evidence for its judgement, the audit team carries out a number of activities, including:
- reviewing the institution's own internal procedures and documents, such as regulations, policy statements, codes of practice, recruitment publications and minutes of relevant meetings, as well as the self-evaluation document itself;
- reviewing the written submission from students;
- asking questions of relevant staff;
- talking to students about their experiences;
- exploring how the institution uses the academic infrastructure.

The audit team also gathers evidence by focusing on examples of the institution's internal quality assurance processes at work using 'audit trails'. These trails may focus on a particular programme or programmes offered at that institution, when they are known as a 'discipline audit trail'. In addition, the audit team may focus on a particular theme that runs throughout the institution's management of its standards and quality. This is known as a 'thematic enquiry'.

From 2004, institutions will be required to publish information about the quality and standards of their programmes and awards in a format recommended in document 02/15 *Information on quality and standards in higher education* published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The audit team reviews progress towards meeting this requirement.

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Summary

Introduction

A team of auditors from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (the Agency) visited the University of East Anglia (UEA or the University) from 19 to 23 January 2004 to carry out an institutional audit. The purpose of the audit was to provide public information on the quality of the opportunities available to students and on the academic standards of awards that the University makes.

To arrive at its conclusions the audit team spoke to members of staff throughout the University, to current students, and read a range of documents relating to the way UEA manages the academic aspects of its provision.

The words 'academic standards' are used to describe the level of achievement that a student has to reach to gain an award (for example, a degree). It should be at a similar level across the UK.

Academic quality is a way of describing how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for them.

In institutional audit, both academic standards and academic quality are reviewed.

Outcome of the audit

As a result of its investigations, the audit team's view of the University is that:

- broad confidence can be placed in the soundness of the University's current and likely future management of the quality of its academic programmes and the academic standards of its awards.

In the course of the audit, the team became aware of the University's intention to restructure from August 2004. In coming to its judgement on the University's likely future management of the quality of its academic programmes and the academic standards of its awards, it is the team's view that the success of the restructuring will be more assured if the recommendations of this report are taken into consideration.

Features of good practice

The audit team identified the following areas as being good practice in the context of the University:

- the sound arrangements underpinning the University's relations with local partner institutions;

- its mentoring arrangements for newly-appointed teaching staff; its provision of research training for postgraduate research students and the opportunities the latter are given to undertake undergraduate teaching after suitable training; and many instances of the work of the Centre for Staff and Educational Development;

- the liaison arrangements between its schools, the Library and the Careers Service;

- the procedure introduced in one school, of returning coursework to students through the adviser system in order to encourage discussions about students' progress, and the thoroughness with which units are reviewed in some areas;

- the advance information provided to students studying for a year abroad by the School of Mathematics;

- the engagement of some schools with the University's widening participation agenda; and the use made by some schools of statistics to inform their internal reviews of their provision;

- the creative ways in which some schools use the University's intranet, email arrangements and virtual learning environments to support teaching and learning; and the way in which some areas draw on student feedback to enhance the curriculum.

Recommendations for action

The audit team advises the University to consider the advisability of:

- reviewing as a matter of priority whether its present use of levels in its assessment arrangements for undergraduates allows sufficient scope for its students to demonstrate progression in their attainments; ensure, as a matter of priority, the participation of fully independent external persons in the initial approval and internal periodic review of its educational provision;

- reviewing as a matter of priority and enhance, where necessary, its academic standards and quality management arrangements for distance and distributed learning, especially for those of its students whose learning is delivered by such means overseas;

- clarifying its requirements of schools with respect to the purpose and conduct of double-marking and/or moderation, and satisfying itself that, in all cases, double-marking and/or moderation are being carried out by its schools in line with its requirements; introducing marking systems that mask the identity of the

candidate from markers and/or examiners, as suggested in the *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* (*Code of practice*) published by the Agency; introducing more robust arrangements for the annual review of provision; developing arrangements to ensure and confirm that commitments given on behalf of the University by schools to external examiners (or to the University itself) are met in a timely fashion; taking forward with alacrity its intention to review at University level, the data routinely collected by and from schools, with a view to ensuring that information can be reliably and consistently generated from it to inform its understanding and management of the academic well-being of its provision, and the security of its academic awards;

- putting in place systematic arrangements for receiving and considering sections of the *Code of practice*, (and any subsequent amendments to sections or precepts of the *Code*), and for confirming how sections of the University's own Code of Practice relate to the precepts of the *Code* and for making them known to staff;

It would be desirable for the University to:

- consider how best to ensure student participation in any new quality management arrangements for faculties;

- develop means to gather and analyse feedback from its students, University-wide, on their experiences;

- review its arrangements, independent of its Information Technology and Computing Services, for establishing and monitoring the extent to which the latter is meeting the needs of staff and students.

Biological sciences; mathematics; music; literature; business and management

To arrive at these conclusions the audit team spoke to staff and students, and was given information about the University as a whole. The team also looked in detail at programmes in the above areas. In all cases the team came to the view that the standard of student achievement in the programmes is appropriate to the titles of the awards and their location within the *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (*FHEQ*), published by the Agency. Again, in each case, the quality of learning opportunities available to students is suitable for a programme of study leading to the relevant awards.

National reference points

To provide further evidence to support its findings the audit team also investigated the use made by the University of the academic infrastructure, a set of nationally agreed reference points developed by the UK higher education sector through the Agency and which helps to define both good practice and academic standards. The findings of the audit suggest that the University has responded appropriately to subject benchmark statements and programme specifications. With respect to the *FHEQ* it would be advisable, however, for the University to review its practice with respect to its use of 'levels' in its assessment arrangements for undergraduate programmes (see above). The University's own Code of Practice does not yet cover the assessment of students, and student placements. Work also remains to be done to bring the University's arrangements for the periodic review of its educational provision into closer alignment with the precepts of the *Code of practice*.

Overall it appeared to the audit team that the University had responded appropriately to subject benchmark statements and programme specifications but that further work would be advisable to review the University's use of 'levels' in its assessment arrangements for undergraduate programmes. Further work would also be advisable in order to extend the University's own internal Codes of Practice to cover the assessment of students and student placements, and to bring the University's arrangements for the approval of new provision and the periodic review of its existing provision into closer alignment with the relevant precepts of the *Code of practice*.

At the time of the audit the University was aware of the requirements set out in document *HEFCE 02/15* and, with promulgation of *HEFCE 03/51* (*Information on quality and standards in higher education: Final guidance),* was beginning to take steps to fulfil its responsibilities in this respect. At the time of the audit the University lacked means to gather and analyse institution-wide feedback from its students on their experiences.

Main report

Main report

1   An institutional audit of the University of East Anglia (UEA or the University) was undertaken during the week commencing 19 January 2004. The purpose of the audit was to provide public information on the quality of the University's programmes of study and on the discharge of its responsibility for its awards.

2   The audit was carried out using a process developed by the Quality Assuarance Agency for Higher Education (the Agency) in partnership with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP) and Universities UK (UUK), which has been endorsed by the Department for Education and Skills. For institutions in England, it replaces the previous processes of continuation audit, undertaken by the Agency at the request of UUK and SCOP, and universal subject review, undertaken by the Agency on behalf of HEFCE, as part of the latter's statutory responsibility for assessing the quality of education that it funds.

3   The audit checked the effectiveness of the University's procedures for establishing and maintaining the standards of its academic awards, for reviewing and enhancing the quality of the programmes of study leading to those awards and for publishing reliable information. As part of the audit process, according to protocols agreed with HEFCE, SCOP and UUK, the audit included consideration of examples of institutional processes at work at programme level, through discipline audit trails (DATs), together with examples of those processes operating at the level of the institution as a whole. The scope of the audit encompassed all of the University's provision and collaborative arrangements leading to its awards.

Section 1: Introduction: the University of East Anglia

The University and its mission

4   UEA was one of seven new universities created in the 1960s and received its Royal Charter in 1964. Its campus is located on the outskirts of Norwich and has won many awards for its architecture. Some 3,500 students can be housed in University residential accommodation on or adjoining the campus. University programmes are also delivered elsewhere in East Anglia, on sites in Hellesdon and King's Lynn.

5   At the time of the continuation audit more than 10,500 students were registered for the University's awards. Since then there has been a steady growth in student numbers and at the time of the present audit more than 12,900 students were registered for the University's awards. Of these, 10,023 were following undergraduate programmes of study, 1,882 were following taught postgraduate programmes, and 1,061 were registered for programmes of study leading to their degree awards. Within these totals, approximately 2,800 students at undergraduate level and 200 students at postgraduate level were studying for the University's awards through collaborative arrangements (see below, paragraphs 39 and 129). The University uses the terms 'programme of study' 'course' and 'degree course' interchangeably to refer to the total of units a student is required to complete in order to meet the credit requirements for an award set out in its regulations. In this report, when the term 'course' is used it should be understood to have the same meaning as 'programme of study'.

6   The University's academic activities are largely delivered through its 18 schools. Individual school boards are formally responsible for research, teaching, staffing and financial matters, and much of the detail of the University's learning and teaching is managed at school level. Coordination of the quality management and academic standards work of the schools takes place through the three Groups of Schools (the Groups) which the University has established 'to capture academic and financial synergies between cognate disciplines' (see below, paragraph 29). The Humanities Group brings together the Schools of Development Studies; English and American Studies; History; Language Linguistics and Translation Studies; Economic and Social Studies and World Art Studies and Music. The Sciences Group takes in the Schools of Biological Sciences; Chemical Sciences and Pharmacy; Computing Sciences; Environmental Sciences; and Mathematics, while the Health and Professional Group coordinates the Schools of Law; Allied Health Law; Medicine, Health Policy and Practice; Management; Nursing and Midwifery; Professional and Continuing Education; and Social Work and Psychosocial Studies.

7   The self-evaluation document (SED) stated that it had been completed 'in the light of the current structure and organisation of the University' but noted that the 'University's Senate and Council have agreed that the structure should be reviewed, in the face of a number of internal and external challenges...The aim is to create larger academic units, reduce the burden of administration on individual academics, reduce costs and improve financial control. Effective compliance mechanisms at all levels will be maintained'. The team later found that at the time of the audit the Vice-Chancellor was

leading a project, supported by external consultants, with the aim of restructuring the University. Papers relating to this project were located by the audit team on the University's intranet (see below, paragraph 22).

Mission statement

8   The University's mission statement is as follows: 'UEA Norwich is a premier research and teaching university. It is dedicated to the advancement of learning and the increase of knowledge, both to satisfy the aspirations of individuals and to contribute to economic, social and cultural progress at regional, national and international levels'.

Collaborative provision

9   The scope of the present audit included consideration of the University's partnership and other collaborative arrangements. Information provided by the University with the SED suggested that its portfolio of partnership arrangements is restricted to a limited number of franchises and validations with local institutions, and with an academy of theatre arts in London. The SED also referred to an accreditation arrangement with Suffolk College under which the latter's undergraduate programmes lead to the University's awards, with the College being responsible for managing the quality of the related provision, subject to periodic reports to the University. In the course of the audit members of the University provided additional information about collaborations with a number of overseas partner institutions which had not been identified in the SED (see below, paragraph 137).

Background information

10   The published information available for this audit included:

- information made available through the HERO portal, the web site of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and the University's own web site;
- published reports of subject reviews conducted by HEFCE and the Agency and an Academic Review at the subject level in computing, conducted by the Agency in 2003; the report of the Agency's continuation audit of the University published in 1998 (the 1998 report), and an audit conducted by the Agency of the University's partnership with the David Yellin Teachers' College, Israel, published in 1999 (the 1999 report).

The University initially provided the Agency with:

- an institutional SED together with its Calendar and other regulatory information and illustrative papers;

- discipline self-evaluation documents (DSEDs) for the five areas selected for DATs.

11   The University provided electronic copies of the SED and further information on CD-ROM. In the course of the briefing visit and the audit visit, the University also provided the audit team with access to its intranet. In the course of the briefing visit and the audit visit the University provided the team with additional papers on request. The team is grateful to the University and its partner institution Otley College of Agricultural and Horticulture (Otley College) for their assistance.

12   The institutional audit method provides for the recognised representative body for students to make a student written submission (SWS) to inform the audit. The Union of UEA Students and the UEA Graduate Students' Association (GSA) provided an SWS which followed the pattern offered in the *Handbook for institutional audit: England* (see below, paragraph 15).

The audit process

13   Following preliminary meetings at the University in February 2003 with representatives of the University and students, the Agency confirmed that five DATs would be conducted during the audit visit. The Agency received the University's institutional SED in September 2003. On the basis of the SED and other information provided, the audit team selected the DATs, and the Agency confirmed to the University that the DATs would focus on: biological sciences; business and management; literature; mathematics; and music. The University provided the Agency with DSEDs for the DATs in November 2003. In each case the DSEDs had been specially written for the audit. The DSED for Biological Sciences included self-evaluation material and internal papers provided, through the University, by Otley College.

14   The audit team visited the University in December 2003 and met the Vice-Chancellor, senior members of the University and students' representatives. The briefing meetings enabled the team to explore matters discussed by the University in its SED and to discuss with students matters they had similarly raised in the SWS. At the end of the briefing visit the team proposed a programme of meetings for the audit visit and requested some additional information. The programme for the audit visit was agreed by the University. No areas were specifically identified for thematic enquiries.

15   As noted above the SWS was jointly compiled and edited by the executive of the Union of UEA Students and officers of the GSA. It had been made available across the student body and had been

shared with the University. The audit team is grateful to students' representatives at the University for providing the SWS to support the audit.

16   The audit visit took place from 19 to 23 January 2004. During the visit the audit team met staff and student members of the University and from one of its partner institutions. The team comprised Dr R J Gadsden, Dr D H Hitchcock, Professor P D Manning, Professor R W Munn, Dr T Phillips and Dr J J A Scott, auditors, and Ms J Newlyn, audit secretary. The audit was coordinated for the Agency by Dr D W Cairns, Assistant Director, Reviews Group.

Developments since the previous academic quality audit

17   The continuation audit report commended the University for:

- the work of its administrative staff in developing its quality assurance framework;

- the commitment of its teaching committee to monitoring teaching quality 'across a devolved school structure';

- the opportunities offered to staff to develop a shared understanding and wide ownership of the University's quality assurance strategy;

- the systematic consideration of external examiners' reports, and the overview of these provided by the Teaching Committee's annual report to Senate; and for

- encouraging 'the formulation of more explicit assessment criteria (grade definitions) for individual or grouped units'.

18   The 1998 report also offered a number of recommendations for the University to consider where action might be advisable to assure the quality of its educational provision and safeguard the academic standards of its awards. These included:

- 'reviewing whether the current structure of its standing committees enables its wider academic community to engage fully in the management of quality assurance, with a level of participation consonant with its declared "systemic" and "integrated" approaches to quality';

- 'reviewing the appropriate balance of responsibilities between academic and administrative staff in their different contributions to the development and implementation of its quality strategy';

- 'moving from a discretionary to a mandatory code of practice in order to eliminate the current uneven application of the monitoring processes at School level';

- 'enabling the Teaching Committee to facilitate quality enhancement through improved feedback on monitoring reports and more effective collection and dissemination of good practice within and across schools';

- 'addressing, as suggested in the report of the 1991 AAU audit, further development of procedures for assuring the quality of taught postgraduate programmes and research supervision, including the arrangements for consistent student representation and effective student feedback; extending the formal integration of external participants in its quality assurance arrangements, and strengthening its use of external contributions and externally generated reports to assist in establishing and comparing academic standards';

- 'ensuring that both units and courses are defined within a common framework in which their specific objectives and criteria of assessment are made explicit';

- 'raising the confidence of students in the systems of representation available to them, thus improving this important channel of communication'.

19   The 1998 report also suggested to the University, among other matters, that it might wish to consider the desirability of 'drawing further upon good practice within its partner institutions in refining its own quality enhancement procedures' and, with respect to the University's sole overseas link at that time, ensuring 'that its procedures are followed with comparable rigour in all areas of collaborative provision'. The audit team noted that the report of an Agency overseas audit of the University's partnership link with an institution in Israel (the 1999 report) identified weaknesses in the way in which the University had monitored the partnership, the ways in which assessment arrangements for students had been handled, and the formal arrangements between the partners. The University's response to these findings was included with the printed report. It acknowledged UEA's awareness of the need for further measures to standardise and clarify the format of its contractual arrangements with its partner; to clarify the implications and procedures for offering its programmes overseas 'substantially in a foreign language'; to clarify the role of the University Adviser; and to clarify and enhance the arrangements for examination procedures and the appointment of external examiners for programmes delivered overseas'. The SED did not refer to the 1999 report but the team was given to understand that the link had since lapsed.

20   The SED described developments in the University's quality management and academic standards arrangements since the continuation audit. From the information available to it in the SED and other documents and from its discussions with members of the University, the audit team came to the view that the University's establishment of the Learning and Teaching Quality Committee (LTQC), combining the roles of the former Teaching Committee and the Board of Graduate Studies with its associated Executive, had been a significant development and, in part, had been a response to the 1998 report. LTQC has a central role in overseeing learning, teaching and quality assurance and in bringing coherence to these activities. Similarly the team considered that the establishment of the three Groups, each headed by a Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC), together with the establishment of Learning and Teaching Quality Executives (LTQEs) for each Group, also represented a significant development. The Groups exercise many of the roles assigned to faculties in other universities, and are capable of providing the University with means to oversee of the work of the schools more closely. Overall, the team was able to identify a number of measures which the University has taken to address the concerns expressed in the 1998 report, although the all-embracing role assigned to LTQC has made its responsibilities demanding and the proliferation of working and task groups which the 1998 report commented on was still observable.

21   The audit team found some matters raised in the 1998 report which continued to be of concern. For example, work remains to be done to strengthen the University's use of external contributions to its quality management arrangements (see below, paragraph 56), and in using externally generated reports (for example, relating to the academic infrastructure) to assist it in quality management (see below, paragraph 63). Nor, in relation to the 1999 report was the team entirely able to satisfy itself that the University's quality management and academic standards arrangements for learning undertaken abroad by students registered for its awards were completely robust (see below, paragraph 139).

22   Through documents provided on the University's intranet, the audit team learned that before the end of the 2002-03 session UEA had embarked on a process of planning for restructuring, with the wide circulation of proposals for changes to its arrangements. External consultants had been retained by the University to assist it in analysing existing processes and practice, for example, in the admission and enrolment of students. Following the announcement of the process of planning for reorganisation, it appeared that the Vice-Chancellor had briefed members of the University, students and unions on a number of occasions, although this had not been mentioned in the SED. It also appeared that the University intended to put restructuring proposals arising from the planning process to Senate in Spring 2004 and, subject to the approval of Senate, to implement any new structures and arrangements from 1 August 2004. A central feature of these proposals appeared to be the introduction of four faculties, with the intention of improving 'the speed, clarity and transparency of decision making' across the University.

23   The University's development of proposals for changes to structures and decision-making processes is likely to have significant consequences for its quality management and academic standards arrangements, but the audit team found no reference in the internal papers it browsed on the University's intranet to the implications of introducing faculties for the management of academic standards and quality. It hopes, however, that the faculties will be able to take forward and strengthen the moves towards greater coordination and consistency which have been associated with the Groups and the LTQEs. If the University's plans for restructuring successfully take into consideration the case for enhancing its quality management and academic standards procedures it could strengthen confidence in these matters for the future.

Section 2: The audit investigations: institutional processes

The University's view as expressed in the SED

24   The University's statement of its 'Learning and Teaching Strategies 2002-05' was appended to the SED. It contained the University's mission statement and a table giving objectives, targets and responsibilities to deliver three strategic aims: research-led learning and teaching; enhancement of quality; and equality of opportunity and widening participation. This document did not articulate the relationship between the objectives and the strategic aims and the SED did not offer a formal statement of how the University assures the quality of its programmes and the academic standards of its awards. It referred to the role of the PVC (LTQ) who chairs the LTQC which has a remit that covers all programmes of study. The SED did, however, state that LTQC was working to achieve a coherent and integrated approach to learning, teaching, quality and standards.

25   The PVC (LTQ) is assisted by the five directors of the Learning, Teaching and Quality Directorate (LTQD). The membership of the LTQD includes the University's Director of Graduate Studies; its Director of Undergraduate Studies; the Director of Quality Assurance (who is the Academic Registrar); the Director of Off-campus and Collaborative Provision (DOCCP) (who is also the Director of Continuing Education); and the Director of Quality Enhancement and Innovation who is the Director of the Centre for Staff and Educational Development. The SED suggested that members of LTQD participated in many of the key groups and committees across the University with responsibilities for the quality management of teaching, learning and the learning environment, and safeguarding the academic standards of awards.

26   The SED emphasised the importance of the University's Codes of Practice in determining and promulgating the University's policies and procedures. At the time of the audit it had developed and issued six Codes of Practice: the 'Code of Practice on Assuring Teaching Quality' (CPATQ); the 'Code of Practice on Assuring the Quality of Research Degrees'; the 'External Examiner System (COPEES) (Taught Provision) and Notes of Guidance for External Examiners'; the 'Code of Good Practice on Student Representation and Staff:Student Liaison in Schools'; the 'Code of Practice on Equal Opportunities for Students'; and the 'Code of Practice on the Promotion of Race Equality for Students'. In addition, the University has also issued a 'Commentary on the Quality Assurance Agency's *Code of practice [for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (Code of practice)]: Section 9: Placement Learning*'; and its Validation Handbook (the Handbook). Where the University has developed a Code of Practice, the relevant sections of the Agency's *Code of practice* had been consulted. Senior members of the University emphasised that the provisions of the University's Codes of Practice were mandatory, and that schools were required to observe them.

27   The SED identified the degree to which responsibilities for quality management and the academic standards of awards had been devolved to the schools as a strength in the University's arrangements in that, *inter alia*, it allowed 'key decisions [to] be made much closer to the immediate context of teaching and learning' and that it provided a 'greater potential for creativity and innovation'. The SED also noted, however, that 'variations in practice can emerge in a devolved structure that can lead to lack of clarity or consistency for students and external agencies'.

It indicated that LTQC was aware of such negative features, that the University attempted to 'achieve a balance between the benefits of standardisation and of appropriate differentiation', and that features of the University's arrangements which assisted it to strike this balance included its formal committee structure and its regulatory framework, together with the provisions of the University's Codes of Practice and the Handbook.

The University's framework for managing the quality and academic standards, including collaborative provision

28   CPATQ states that the key procedures and processes employed by UEA for assuring the academic standards of its awards include 'extensive external involvement', 'particularly via the external examiner system'; Agency subject reviews (which have now ceased); Ofsted inspections and validation and accreditation by professional and statutory bodies; 'rigorous assessment procedures and practices'; staff appointment development promotion and appraisal procedures; strong regulatory frameworks; and established arrangements for the approval of new courses, the biennial review of units (now superseded by annual reviews), and quinquennial review of degree courses; with 'well-defined procedures governing off-campus and collaborative provision'.

29   Detailed responsibility for the conduct of quality management has been delegated by Senate to the LTQC which is thereby responsible for overseeing the University's undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate provision. As noted earlier, the three Groups have similarities in their functions to faculties in other higher education institutions (HEIs). The audit team was told that Groups may be helpful in mediating between schools where the interests of the latter overlap, or are in competition: for example, in the allocation of space or in securing additional library resource. Each Group is served by an LTQE which serves as a channel between the schools and the LTQC; LTQEs may be consulted by LTQC on policy matters. The University does not have a consolidated quality management manual although the Handbook could serve as a model.

30   LTQEs have significant quality-control responsibilities. For example, they are responsible for the scrutiny of new courses and recommendations to LTQC for their approval; ensuring that reviews of courses and units are undertaken, for considering the resulting reports and for overseeing annual reviews of the progress of postgraduate research students. LTQEs are also responsible for reviewing reports from

external examiners associated with programmes and awards offered through the schools in the Group, and for checking the responses from the schools. The coordinating role of the LTQEs within the Groups has yet to curtail the considerable freedom the University allows to its schools, however, as in some instances LTQC continues to communicate directly with schools. Reviewing the progress made by the LTQEs the audit team came to the view that they had enabled a degree of coordination across the schools within each Group and, potentially, across Groups, and that the device of attaching a member of the Registry to each Group as its Administrator provided a further, helpful, channel of communication and coordination between the centre, the Groups and the schools. A weakness of the University's present arrangements is the ability of the schools to refer matters directly to LTQC. This lessens the capacity of the LTQEs to deal with matters which might not need to be referred to LTQC. As the University continues to develop its planned faculty structures, it may wish to consider how to ensure that this weakness is not carried forward into its new arrangements, in order to ensure that reporting lines are effective and reliable and do not undermine the faculties.

31   School boards are formally responsible for learning and teaching. They are required to operate a teaching committee or an equivalent body which provides a forum for the coordination and management of learning and teaching across the school. The University has appointed administrators to each school, who are also assistant registrars and retain a base in the Registry. Members of the University who described this arrangement to the audit team were confident that it encouraged closer coordination between the centre of the University and the schools. The appointment of school administrators has no doubt helped communication between the schools and the centre; however, the team found that significant aspects of the management of the University's provision are decided on and documented only at school level. The University's capacity to take an overview of the activities of its schools is therefore limited at the present. The University's present arrangements for quality management depend to a great degree on the professionalism of staff in the schools, to which much of the active management of the University's provision continues to be delegated. This is not only the case for provision delivered on the University's campus but also for provision delivered wholly overseas, or in part - as is the case with student placements abroad (see below).

32   One consequence of the central role accorded to LTQC is that it is required to transact a high volume of business at each of its meetings. Not infrequently, this appears to result in an agenda which is too full to allow thorough consideration of all items. Members of the University told the audit team that in such circumstances items might be dealt with elsewhere in the University's committee or management arrangements. This no doubt helps to progress the University's business, but it also has the potential to exclude student members of LTQC from any such discussions, a matter on which students commented in the SWS.

33   The Vice-Chancellor suggested to the audit team that the University's present combination of LTQC, LTQD, the Groups and the LTQEs, provided a 'spine' which ensured consistency in the manner in which the schools operated and provided some direction. The team found some evidence in the recent work of the Groups, the LTQEs, and LTQC to support this view, but the direction set in establishing the Groups and the LTQEs could be taken further and with more vigour, as may happen if the University proceeds with its plan to introduce four faculties. For example, if the LTQC was to deal with schools only through the Groups (or the proposed faculties), this would have the effect of reducing some of the burden on LTQC, and contribute to greater consistency in arrangements and decisions. It might also help to reduce the need for the LTQC to establish *ad hoc* working groups on a frequent basis.

34   Aspects of the University's assessment arrangements are detailed in several of the University's regulatory documents, for example, in the Common Course Structure (CCS) Regulations. Such material focuses, however, on matters such as proportions of assessment of different types in overall degree marks, while largely ignoring details of the process of assessment, such as how to achieve a shared understanding of what a given mark may mean. The audit team noted with interest that a table outlining a scheme for marking coursework had been circulated to schools by the University for comment.

35   The University's CCS Regulations provide for units to be classified at one of four levels: level 0 - introductory; level 1 - initial degree level 'not normally counting towards the final degree classification, except for students following degree courses in subjects which are not cognate'; level 2 - degree level, 'normally counting towards the final degree classification'; level 3 - degree level, 'counting towards the final degree classification, and available only in the final year of study (except in the case of the MB/BS where level 3 units occur at an earlier stage)'; level 4 - degree level 'counting towards the final degree classification, and available

only in the final year of integrated Masters degrees'. The audit team's study of the University's papers showed that final year honours students could take a substantial number of units at level 2; in some cases these might constitute more than 50 per cent of the units taken. In its discussions with members of the University the team found a common view that in undergraduate programmes all year two and year three programmes were at the same (honours) level, with the exceptions noted above. In such a case, the rationale for allowing a high proportion of level 2 units to be taken in the final year of an undergraduate programme is clear; it does, however, make it difficult for the University to demonstrate in all cases (other than where there are stated prerequisites) that the curriculum imposes an increasing level of demand on the learner during the course of the programme.

36   The SED stated the University's intention to conduct a review of its assessment arrangements which will report to LTQC. As the University continues to enhance assessment arrangements, it will wish to consider reviewing, as a matter of priority, whether its present use of levels in the assessment of undergraduate work gives students sufficient scope to demonstrate progression in their attainments (see below, paragraphs 165 and 188).

37   Under the University's regulations, external examiners are expected to comment on marking standards; the appropriateness of assessment and the criteria for assessment applied by internal markers; schemes for marking and classification; and the administration of the assessments by the internal markers, including the management of scripts (for example, the time available for marking) and the impartiality with which the assessments are conducted. External examiners are also expected to comment on the procedures followed by the board of examiners and their participation in the assessment process. The University does not require that coursework be double-marked. In the course of its scrutiny of reports from external examiners, the audit team noted several comments to the effect that the former had been unable to confirm for the sample of scripts with which they had been provided that moderation or double-marking had been carried out, as required by the University. In a number of instances, the team's independent scrutiny of examination scripts did not allow it to be confident that double-marking and/or moderation of scripts was being carried out in line with the University's expectations.

38   The audit team noted with interest that the Agency's Academic Review of computing at the

subject level, the report of which was published shortly before the audit visit, had found that the School of Information Systems needed 'to reflect how its assessment procedures can be further strengthened, particularly in relation to second-marking, the continued development and use of more explicit marking criteria, and consistency in providing sufficiently full comments on students' written work'. The report had also observed that the School should consider 'the use of the full marking range, particularly as this applies to good student work, to ensure that students and staff are fully aware of what is required for a First class honours award'. The team noted that the SWS had also commented on the number of students responding to its survey questionnaire who expressed doubts that their work was subject to double-marking and who feared that in the absence of procedures for anonymous marking the possibility of bias could not be excluded. The University might wish to consider the advisability of clarifying its requirements of schools with respect to the purpose and conduct of double-marking and/or moderation, and satisfying itself that, in all cases, double-marking and/or moderation are being carried out by schools in line with its requirements. The University may also wish to consider introducing marking systems that mask the identity of the candidate from markers and/or examiners, as suggested in the *Code of practice*.

39   LTQC is formally responsible for overseeing the University's collaborative provision, including validated programmes operated by partners and leading to the University's towards. It is supported in this work by the LTQD, the membership of which includes the DOCCP. The University has produced a Handbook and has mapped the quality assurance arrangements of its local partners against the precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision*.

40   The University assigns an adviser with an appropriate subject background from its teaching staff to each of its partner institutions; such advisers are responsible for liaising between subject level staff in the partner and the University, and for keeping the latter informed of developments in the partner. The University has also established joint boards of studies with each partner institution. The evidence available to the audit team indicated that the University's collaborative provision with partners in its locality is carefully and conscientiously managed through the work of the joint boards of studies, ably supported by the advisers and staff in the partner institutions. For example, the team was able to confirm that joint boards of studies had not only considered the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision*, but had also

worked through the implications of other sections of the latter in the context of collaborative provision. The University uses the term 'adviser' both to refer to those charged with liaison on behalf of the University with its partner institutions, and to tutors across the University with responsibility for providing students with academic advice and guidance.

41   In the course of the visit, the audit team learnt that where the University has established a partnership overseas to support the study of students (both for students domiciled overseas and for students based in the UK completing a study period abroad) such arrangements did not appear to be regarded by the University as collaborative provision, and were not part of the remit of the DOCCP, even when such periods of study abroad contribute marks towards the final award. The University has established formal agreements with European partners involved in ERASMUS/SOCRATES exchanges but the team was unable to confirm whether equivalent agreements had been concluded with partners outside Europe. At the time of the audit, the Humanities and Social Sciences Group had produced a commentary on the *Code of practice, Section 6*: *Placement learning*, published by the Agency in 2001, but the University had yet to develop any formal regulatory material for this area. The University will wish to consider the advisability, as a matter of priority, of reviewing and enhancing, where necessary, its academic standards and quality assurance arrangements for students undertaking all or part of their learning overseas.

42   Overall, the University relies on its schools to conduct the day-to-day management of its academic provision guided by its Codes of Practice. Much of the practical implementation of quality management across the University involves dialogue between schools, Groups and the centre of the University, chiefly via LTQC. The audit team was able to confirm that this dialogue is detailed and appropriate, and is conducted within the scope of the University's Codes of Practice. Senior members of the University told the team that schools had been reminded that observance of UEA's Codes of Practice is mandatory. There are, however, some important areas of the University's academic activities which would now benefit from the more comprehensive guidance that could be provided by a code of practice; these include the assessment of students and the management of student placements. It would also be of benefit to the University to conduct a systematic mapping of the provisions of its own Codes of Practice against the guidance offered by the *Code of practice,* published by the Agency, for example, in the

approval of new programmes of study and the periodic review of programmes, where expectations for the participation of fully independent external peers in the approval of programmes could be made clearer. As the University takes forward its plans to develop faculties it will also wish to consider carrying forward the good features of quality management currently practised in the Groups and their LTQEs, so that faculties in the University's future management arrangements can continue to provide the support and guidance that the LTQEs currently give. At the same time, the University might wish to consider the merits of ensuring that for all routine matters schools approach LTQC via the Groups or their successors.

The University's intentions for the enhancement of quality and the management of academic standards

43   The SED identified a considerable number of areas where the University was enhancing its quality management and academic standards arrangements through improving existing procedures and introducing new approaches in response to legislation, such as the Disabilities Discrimination Act, and external developments, such as the academic infrastructure. The details of some of the individual proposals are discussed at the appropriate points elsewhere in the report, but the following list gives some idea of the number and scope of the initiatives being undertaken by the University:

- continuing work to refine the University's 'use of the QAA "architecture" of programme specifications and subject benchmark statements';

- enhancements to operational arrangements for the Student Affairs Group (SAG) and, more generally, in arrangements for consulting students and feeding back information to them;

- updating to the CCS;

- work to comply with recent legislation (for example, the Disabilities Discrimination Act), and work with partner institutions to enhance their practice;

- enhanced arrangements for unit reviews and a shift from biennial to annual unit reviews (see below, paragraph 51);

- greater provision for student involvement in quinquennial reviews;

- enhanced arrangements for the development of new and mid-career staff;

- work to support awareness of, and to monitor equality of opportunity;

- the introduction of ways to handle university-level matters raised by external examiners.

44   In addition to the above, the University is committed to review and extend its collaborative arrangements where appropriate and a large number of individual initiatives is being taken forward to enhance the University's learning environment. A major aim of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategies for 2002-05 is to develop research-led teaching as one of the hallmarks of education at UEA for all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. The intention is that research will complement teaching rather than compete with it. In line with this aim, LTQC commissioned a substantial report on research-led teaching which was published in December 2000. At the time of the audit the University had recently appointed a research fellow to take forward this work.

45   The SED did not pull together in a coherent fashion the University's many initiatives to enhance its educational provision and the quality management of its programmes. Although staff across the University appeared to the team to be working energetically to seek and to take forward opportunities for enhancement under the University's current arrangements, the identification and dissemination of information on good practice, and practice to be avoided, represents a significant challenge. To date, this challenge has only partly been addressed by the good work of LTQC, for example, in publishing a digest of comments in external examiners' reports. The University might wish to consider the desirability of inviting schools, through the Groups or their successors, to provide information periodically on school and Group-level enhancement activities and their progress, which could be added to information on University-level projects to provide senior committees with a consolidated statement of the University's enhancement activities.

Internal approval, monitoring and review processes

Programme approval

46   The development and approval of proposals for new programmes of study leading to awards of the University is governed by the provisions of CPATQ, and overall responsibility for the approval, monitoring and review of programmes rests with LTQC. Proposals for new programmes of study normally originate at school level. Those proposing new programmes of study are required to set out their proposal on a standard form and secure the support of the board of the relevant school, or schools. In addition, for proposals requiring additional library or other learning

resources the proposers are expected to seek the advice of the relevant service providers and may need to refer the proposal to the University's Planning and Resources Committee. Proposers are then expected to send their completed standard form for approval in principle to LTQC, which delegates responsibility for subsequent scrutiny to Group LTQEs. The latter have the authority to confer approval on a proposal which is then notified to LTQC. CPATQ directs that proposals be set out on a standard form for submission to the teaching committee or school board for scrutiny. Proposals endorsed by a school's teaching committee and/or its school board are sent to LTQC.

47   Under present arrangements, proposals for new programmes of study must be submitted to a full meeting of LTQC for approval in principle, prior to detailed consideration by the relevant Group LTQE. In cases where a proposal relates to a programme of study to be offered in collaboration with a partner, detailed consideration is remitted to a panel constituted for the purpose, rather than a Group LTQE. A fast track procedure is available for 'proposals that consist wholly or largely of existing units', and are considered not to have resource implications. Such cases are considered by the relevant Learning and Teaching Quality Director (Undergraduate Studies or Graduate Studies) and the Academic Registrar, and scrutinised by relevant officers of the Registry. At the time of the audit the University was considering whether new proposals which could be considered straightforward should be remitted to the Undergraduate Studies Executive or the Graduate Studies Executive, as appropriate, for consideration.

48   CPATQ was last revised in 1999, and so predates the publication of the *Code of practice, Section 7: Programme approval, monitoring and review*, in 2000. The audit team was given to understand, however, that key aspects of the *Code* had been taken into consideration in the design of a standard programme specification template for each new course proposal, introduced in 2002. CPATQ does not, however, require the participation of external peers, although where a proposal relates to a new programme which would fall under the purview of a professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) it is expected that peer experts from outside the University will be asked to comment prior to approval. It was not clear, however, whether external peers would be consulted as part of the process to approve such a proposal.

49   The 1998 report found that there was no requirement for external involvement in the approval of new undergraduate courses (paragraph 42): it is not clear from CPATQ that this deficiency

has now been fully remedied in all cases. This is an important matter which the University will wish to check at an early opportunity, in order to give greater substance to the view that its current approach to the consideration of new course proposals 'remains a robust procedure'.

50   Reviewing the provisions of the University's template for programme specifications, the audit team found that those completing a proposal are referred by the University to the precepts and guidance given in the *Code of practice* and the *FHEQ*. The University's template does not, however, explicitly require an articulation of 'the way in which the curriculum promotes an organised progression' year by year. The difficulties this may cause is most apparent in terms of the expected progression between the second year (level 2) and the final year (level 3) of honours programmes. This lack of differentiation was evident in some of the programme specifications for University programmes of study reviewed as part of the DATs.

Annual monitoring

51   Until the current session (2003-04), the University's arrangements for monitoring followed the procedures set out in CPATQ which provide for biennial monitoring of provision by unit, and quinquennial course reviews (quinquennial reviews of programmes of study). The SED noted that in the previous session LTQC had established a Review Group to consider the biennial monitoring of units, and that the Group had come to the conclusion that unit monitoring had become a routine activity and that the process had not encouraged a reflective approach on the part of staff to reviewing the performance of units. Accordingly, in March 2003, Senate, advised by LTQC, had authorised a new methodology 'for the regular review of units and courses from 2003-04' (the New Methodology). The New Methodology provides for annual unit monitoring. It is predicated on the view that 'it is not possible to monitor all aspects of a unit or use all possible types of evidence each time that it is delivered'. Unit organisers are therefore advised 'to select particular aspects on each occasion a unit is delivered'. Approval for the approach chosen by the unit organiser rests with the relevant school teaching committee which must ensure that the resulting unit monitoring reports suitably inform the subsequent course update. Unit monitoring provides the basis for a new process of course update and for an annual review of programme specifications and course profiles. Final consideration and approval of course updates is carried out by the relevant Group LTQE. Course updates provide one stream of

information for the University's new quinquennial course review process (see below).

52   The University's new procedures for unit monitoring, together with the annual course update process, are intended to rectify a number of the shortcomings which the University had previously identified in its former procedures for annual unit monitoring. At the time of the present audit, the new procedures, introduced in autumn 2003, had yet to yield concrete results, but the audit team was able to give some consideration to their design. The degree of flexibility afforded to unit organisers and schools in the selection of matters to feature in unit reviews has the potential to lead to inconsistencies and gaps in the University's understanding of its teaching and learning provision, and are unlikely to meet UEA's requirements for consistent and timely data on its educational provision across all its schools. Since the University has itself identified that its 'decentralised processes are diverse, difficult to audit, inconsistent and vulnerable to error', and its management information 'is hard to come by and often unexploited' it will be important that any new form of unit and course monitoring does not continue the weaknesses the University has already identified for itself in its former arrangements. The University may, therefore, wish to consider the advisability of developing more robust arrangements for the annual review of its educational provision.

Periodic review

53   New procedures for the quinquennial review of courses (programmes of study) were introduced as part of the New Methodology. There was evidence to suggest that the former arrangements for quinquennial course reviews had not been operated consistently across the University, and that it had been difficult, in some instances, for the centre to confirm when quinquennial course reviews had taken place. The audit team therefore welcomed the University's determination to tackle this matter in advance of the present audit.

54   The University's new process of course review is organised in three phases: the preparation of documentation by the course director; a course review event conducted by a course review panel with a report to the Group LTQE; and a follow-up and dissemination process conducted by the school teaching and learning committee or school board, and the relevant Group LTQE. The membership of a course review panel is stipulated in the University's 'New Methodology for the Regular Review of Units and Courses from 2003-04' (the New Methodology). A course review panel must include among its members the course director whose course is under

review; at least one independent member external to the University; at least one other member proposed by the school teaching committee; a member nominated and appointed by the Group LTQE; and a secretary. There is provision for students to be consulted in the preparation of course review documentation and representatives meet the panel as part of the review event which is intended to be 'enquiring rather than inquisitorial'.

55   As with unit review and course update, the procedure for course review set out in the New Methodology had yet to yield sufficient concrete results for the audit team to reach a settled view on its likely effectiveness. Nonetheless, the team is worried that the process may lack robustness. For example, the inclusion of not only the course director but representatives from the course under review in the membership of a review panel, may assist collegiality and the flow of information from the course team to the panel, but is likely to inhibit the objectivity of the review process itself and diminish the standing of its findings. The team was also concerned to find that the University specifically provided for the participation of current or recent external examiners as external members of review panels. In this particular instance, the fact that the review process would, in effect, be inviting serving or recent external examiners to comment on their own performance and reports did not seem to the team to contribute to the objectivity of the process.

External participation in internal approval and review processes

56   The SED did not discuss the University's view of the importance of external participation in its internal approval and review processes. Its New Methodology notes the requirement for an independent member external to the University to be a member of a review panel, but does not explain the rationale for this. The University's arrangements for the development and approval of new programmes of study provide for the participation of independent external persons where the course is linked to a professional, statutory or regulatory body. In other cases, however, the case for the participation of external peers in decisions to approve new programme proposals is not made, and the New Methodology for quinquennial course review provides for the participation of current and/or recent external examiners as panel members. The audit team advises the University, as a matter of priority, to ensure the participation of fully independent external persons in quinquennial course review. At the same time, it might also be wise to consider the position with respect to the

participation of fully independent external peers in the approval of new programmes of study.

External examiners and their reports

57   Recommendations for appointment of external examiners are made to Senate by individual schools following guidance provided within the UEA Code of Practice for the External Examiner System for Awards (taught programmes) (COPEES) at UEA. Recommendations must be approved by the relevant Director of Undergraduate or Graduate Studies and letters of appointment are issued by the University's Learning and Teaching Quality Office (LTQO), which supports the work of the LTQD. COPEES prescribes the information to be issued to new external examiners, including a set of guidance notes and details of the course and programme structures, curricula and programme specifications. Newly-appointed external examiners are also invited to attend a briefing visit at UEA.

58   External examiners are issued with guidance on the academic and procedural matters which should be addressed in their reports. This guidance draws on the relevant precepts of the *Code of practice* and includes reference to curricula and appropriateness of the assessment procedures and their implementation. The University is currently undertaking a pilot exercise to assess the potential use of standard report forms which have been requested by some examiners.

59   External examiners are directed to address their reports to the PVC (LTQ) who is required to read each report in its original form; copies of reports are sent to each school by LTQO. The PVC (LTQ) will contact a school directly if there are matters of significance in the reports which he considers need to be addressed. Group LTQEs receive the responses which the schools propose to make to external examiners in order to check that they address the points raised and, when the LTQE is satisfied, it approves the responses and sends confirmation to the LTQC. The school may then send its response to the external examiner. On the basis of the reports it receives from the Group LTQEs, LTQC prepared an overview report for the whole University in 2002-03 to enable consideration of generic issues across schools and Groups. This report includes statements outlining the implementation of previous action points and also considers matters raised by external examiners and responses to them over the previous five years.

60   The SED stated that the University considered 'that the mechanisms in place for dealing with and responding to the reports from our external examiners are robust' and that 'external examiners

confirm the standard and quality of UEA's awards and the processes whereby students' achievement is considered'. The SED also provided examples of changes to University policy which had followed from recommendations made by external examiners, such as the review of the CCS Regulations.

61   The reports from external examiners seen by the audit team were consistent with the reporting guidelines set out by the University. In the sample provided, all external examiners had been able to confirm that they had received responses from the schools to their reports. In almost all cases external examiners were also able to confirm that their recommendations had been addressed. All the reports clearly stated that the external examiners had been consulted regarding the examination papers to be set, and that they could confirm the appropriateness and reliability of the standards and assessment. In most instances, external examiners were also able to confirm the robustness of marking practices across the institution. In some cases, however, external examiners queried whether double-marking and/or moderation was being carried out, and whether model answers were being provided as required. The recently concluded Academic Review at the subject level of computing, conducted by the Agency in May 2003, found that there were cases 'where professional bodies and external examiners had to repeat their comments before their concerns were fully addressed'. When taken together, this evidence suggested to the team that responses to external examiners by schools might not always be followed up as thoroughly as they needed to be. It would therefore be advisable for the University to ensure and confirm that commitments given on its behalf by schools to external examiners (or to itself by schools) are met in a timely fashion.

External reference points

62   The University's New Methodology and its own Codes of Practice provide those referring to them with web links to relevant sections of the Agency's web site. For example, the paper introducing the New Methodology, indicates that key points of reference for course review are the *Code of practice*, the *FHEQ* and subject benchmark statements. The SED referred to the various elements of the academic infrastructure at many points, but provided no clear statement of the University's view of the correspondence between its own internal regulations and Codes of Practice and the academic infrastructure.

63   The audit team could not be sure from the information provided by the University that the latter had adopted a thorough approach to assessing its

existing arrangements against the advice offered throughout the various elements of the academic infrastructure. For example, with respect to the *Code of practice*, it appeared that the University had not carried out a systematic mapping or analysis of the precepts of the *Code* against its own arrangements. The University will wish to consider the advisability of developing and publishing to all staff systematic arrangements for receiving and considering sections of the *Code*, and any subsequent amendments to sections or precepts of the *Code*. The University will also wish to consider the advisability of confirming for itself how its own Codes of Practice relate to the precepts of the *Code* published by the Agency.

64   The SED stated that the University had made extensive use of subject benchmark statements, and had developed a system of programme specifications based on advice and models provided by the Agency. The programme specifications made available to support the DATs enabled the audit team to confirm that this was the case, and that course teams routinely refer to subject benchmark statements. With respect to the *FHEQ*, however, it seemed to the team that the manner in which the concept of 'levels' is used in the University's current CCS Regulations does not sit easily with the advice provided in the *FHEQ*, in that under present arrangements it appears possible for a student to secure an honours degree having studied half (or fewer) of the units in their final year of study at level 3 (see above, paragraph 35).

65   With respect to its collaborative provision with local partners, the University's arrangements for considering the implications of elements of the academic infrastructure appear to have been thorough, and provide one of several instances of good practice in the University's generally sound arrangements for its collaborative provision with local partners. The audit team was able to confirm through reading the minutes of many joint boards of studies, and the reports of advisers, that the University's local partner institutions have been diligent in matching their internal arrangements against the guidance offered by the academic infrastructure. In the case of collaborations with overseas partners (whether to support students on placements, or support students studying entirely overseas) the picture was, however, less clear (see below, paragraph 106).

66   Overall, it appeared to the audit team that the University had responded appropriately to subject benchmark statements and to programme specifications, but that further work would be advisable to review the University's use of 'levels' in its assessment arrangements for undergraduate programmes. Further work would also be advisable

in order to extend the University's own internal Codes of Practice to cover the assessment of students and student placements, and to bring the University's arrangements for the periodic review of its existing provision into closer alignment with the relevant precepts of the *Code of practice*.

Programme-level review and accreditation by external agencies

67   The University takes pride in the results it secured during the programme of HEFCE Teaching Quality Assessments and Agency subject reviews. There have been ten such reviews since the publication of the 1998 report. The SED drew the attention of the audit team to the findings of an Academic Review at the subject level which the Agency had conducted in May 2003 under the terms of the transitional arrangements for institutional audit. The SED informed the team that the report of this Academic Review had confirmed the standards of the relevant awards and 'commended its teaching and learning, student progression and learning resources'. The SED did not, however, comment on the reviewers' finding that 'legitimate concerns raised by external examiners and professional bodies had not always received prompt and full attention or been dealt with as expeditiously and effectively as possible'.

68   Many of the University's programmes of study are subject to the requirements of external PSRBs. In the Health and Professional Group of schools, awards in nursing and midwifery, medicine, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, pharmacy and social work are all subject to professional requirements. Similarly, programmes of study leading to awards in accounting, chemistry, computer science, and law also are subject to external requirements from professional bodies. The University's programmes in education which lead to Qualified Teacher Status are also subject to inspection by Ofsted.

69   In 1998 report found 'no evidence that the reports of professional bodies were considered in the University beyond the relevant board of school'. At the time of the present audit the evidence suggested to the audit team that the University was working to close this information gap through the New Methodology and its requirement for the production of programme specifications. As part of the evidence it provided to support the audit the University had produced with the SED a consolidated list of awards associated with PSRBs. Under the New Methodology, course reviews for provision associated with a PSRB may be linked to control the burden on schools. The evidence

available to the team suggests that the University is now in a position to take an overview of the findings of reviews of its provision conducted by or for PSRBs. Through one of the DATs the team was able to establish that schools had continued to liaise directly with PSRBs without (in this instance) the involvement of the Group LTQEs or LTQC. The reports of the recent Academic Review at the subject level of computing suggests, however, that work remains to be done to ensure that undertakings given to PSRBs on behalf of the University are met (see below, paragraph 205).

Student representation at operational and institutional level

70   The University's expectations for student representation are set out in its 'Code of Good Practice for Student Representation and Staff Student Liaison in Schools' (Code for Student Representation). This states that 'student representation is a key component of quality assurance in higher education in the twenty-first century. For that reason, and because the University recognises that students now have a greater financial stake in their education and so a greater concern about its standard, it is important that student representation works in a manner which meets both institutional and student needs'. The Code for Student Representation deals with information to students; the recruitment of school board representatives; the purpose and function of staff:student liaison groups; the promotion of student representation within schools; the involvement of students in the work of the Groups; the involvement in unit reviews (under the former monitoring scheme) and quinquennial reviews; the need to monitor representation; and suggestions for good practice in staff:student liaison.

71   Students are formally represented on many University committees at all levels of the institution. Some Senate disciplinary committees and the associated appeals committees permit student members, depending on the nature of the case being heard, and students' representatives attend the Court, the Council, and Senate and its committees: LTQC and the External Affairs and Recruitment Committee (EARC), and the latter's Admissions Subcommittee. Students are also represented on the Library and Learning Resources Committee and the IT and Computing Committee. Within the schools, students are represented on school boards and may be members of school teaching committees and graduate studies committees where these are separate from teaching committees.

72   Student representatives on University committees are either elected by fellow students in their school or may be nominated by the Union of UEA Students and/or the UEA GSA. For some University committees, officers of the Union of UEA Students or the GSA are members ex officio. The SED noted that students may also be invited to act as members of Working Groups. For example, students have been invited to join the University's Race Equality Working Group, its Widening Participation Strategy Group, its Timetabling Project Team and the group reviewing arrangements for student arrivals and induction.

73   The University has established a SAG which meets weekly during term time. It is chaired by the Dean of Students and includes Officers of the Union of UEA Students and GSA and senior managers of support services of the University. Students who discussed the work of the SAG with the audit team observed that it provided their only opportunity to make comments at a senior level on the resourcing of the University's learning environment, but that it had no formal place in the University's committee system. Members of the University told the team that the position of the SAG was under consideration at the time of the audit.

74   LTQC conducted a review of the University's Code for Student Representation in 2000-01, the report of which identified difficulties in recruiting student representatives at school level and 'that formal review of the mechanisms for staff:student liaison is patchy across Schools, as is the routine lodging of agendas, papers and minutes with the Union of Students (only two Schools reported that they did this on a regular basis)'. The SWS stated that while the University's Code for Student Representation 'provides a good basis for student representation at a school level, allowing for diversity between schools whilst providing guidelines, it is our experience that a number of the loosely worded requirements are not adhered to'. It also noted that some schools do not provide adequate support for internal communication, for example, by providing notice boards or hosting a web site.

75   The SED stated that the University provided 'opportunities for students to participate in University decision-making, to be consulted and to make their views known through a variety of informal and formal processes'. Overall, the SWS indicated that students were broadly satisfied with their opportunities to participate in the work of the University's committees, with the reservations noted above. The SWS suggested that the absence of student representatives from the University's Planning Committee made it more difficult for students to learn about key developments in the University's estate, or other aspects of its future direction. It also suggested that the high volume of business which LTQC attempted to transact led to a number of instances where items of interest to students were remitted to working groups, or to the University's managers, restricting the opportunities for student representatives to participate in the University's quality management arrangements as effectively as they might wish. These are matters the University might wish to tackle in order to reaffirm the importance it assigns to effective representation arrangements for students.

76   In the course of the DATs, members of the audit team had the opportunity to meet student representatives in the schools and to discuss with them their opportunities to participate in meetings at that level and the information provided for them. In general, students in the schools told the team that they were satisfied with the way in which student representation arrangements worked at that level. In one DAT the team encountered an example of good practice in the way that comments on the curriculum by student representatives in the relevant School Teaching Committee were used to enhance the provision. This appeared to the team to be a feature of good practice.

77   Overall, on the evidence available to it, the audit team came to the view that the University's arrangements for student representation provided a range of opportunities for its students to contribute to its quality management arrangements. As it continues to develop its student representation arrangements in the context of proposals for the establishment of faculties, the University may wish to take the opportunity to review student representation at that level and below.

Feedback from students, graduates and employers

78   The University seeks feedback and evaluation information from students, graduates and employers through a number of different approaches. The views of students on the central services of the University are gathered via an annual survey of library and IT provision. At the time of the audit, the Communications Division of the Registry was also engaged in a series of small, pilot focus group meetings with current students on their experience of the University, including the recruitment and admissions process. Information secured from this process is reported to deans of schools, where relevant, and directors of central services.

79   The Admissions Office seeks feedback from applicants and potential applicants regarding the quality of open days through the University's Communications Division and a careers survey is conducted every three years through which information is sought from graduates on their experience of the University as a whole. The audit team was able to confirm that feedback and evaluation information gathered through the careers survey is used to inform the approaches the University makes to applicants and first-year students.

80   CPATQ expects the views of undergraduate and taught postgraduate students be obtained each time a unit of study is offered, usually via questionnaires. Data gathered through questionnaires is to be used in what will now be an annual review of units by schools. CPATQ also expects that the views of students from all years will be gathered and analysed during quinquennial reviews of courses. Postgraduate research students are invited to comment on their progress and experience of supervision as well as on the provision of facilities such as IT and support provided by the Library in their mandatory annual progress review, which is conducted at school level with the outcomes monitored by Group LTQEs. The University's Information Services Directorate conducts annual surveys of users of the Library, IT and Computing Services, and Audio Visual Services, and the audit team was also able to see examples of how information from student feedback had been used to inform and enhance the work of the Library. The evidence available to the team on the nature of the information UEA routinely seeks from employers of its students did not enable it to come to a firm view on how such information is used by the University.

81   The SWS expressed some concerns that systems for collecting and acting upon student feedback at school level varied in their effectiveness. Data collected by the Union of UEA Students showed that, overall, more than 80 per cent of students were able to report that their views had been sought on their units of study. The data also revealed some surprisingly wide variations across schools. Meetings with students in the course of the DATs enabled the audit team to confirm that while there is a clear commitment to collecting and using student feedback at school level, and that students in some schools are confident that they understand what is done with their feedback information and are satisfied with the response to it; however, this is not so in all schools.

82   The University's New Methodology for unit review and course update and quinquennial review makes specific provision for the collection of evaluation information from students and its analysis and use in monitoring and review. Although not conducted under the New Methodology the audit team found that, in some instances, the views of graduates had been sought to inform course reviews. The SWS welcomed the provisions for clear use of student feedback and evaluation information in the New Methodology. The SED indicated that the University continued to look for ways to enhance the provision for making use of such feedback; for example, from 2003-04, LTQC will consider the outcomes of all University-level surveys.

83   Information provided to support one of the DATs provided evidence for the collection and analysis of student feedback and evaluation information in partner institutions. The audit team was able to confirm, for example, that Otley College had effective arrangements for gathering and analysing feedback from students registered for the University's awards. Otley students were not sure, however, what use the University made of the information they provided.

84   On the evidence available to it, the audit team came to the view that the University's arrangements for collecting, analysing and disseminating feedback from students, graduates and employers at unit level were broadly satisfactory, and that the introduction of the New Methodology and plans by LTQC to take a more direct interest in the outcomes of University-wide surveys, indicated that the University was taking steps to enhance its collection and use of feedback and evaluation data from its students. Work remains to be done, however, to ensure that schools undertake the feedback and evaluation exercises to which they are committed under the New Methodology, and to develop means to collect information from students, institution-wide, on their experiences of their learning opportunities. This would now be advisable.

Progression and completion statistics

85   The SED stated that the University has 'established procedures' for tracking student admissions, and student progression and achievement, and that responsibility for overseeing these tracking procedures rests with EARC and LTQC respectively, together with the school boards. Information on undergraduate admissions is provided to EARC through an annual report produced by the University's Admissions Office. A similar report for postgraduate taught student admissions was produced for the first time for academic year 2002-03.

86   While the SED stated that the University 'has a good track record with regard to its progression and

retention rates', it provided no detailed statistics to support this claim, and the data cited dated from 1999-2000 when it had formed part of a HEFCE publication. It did, however, signal its intention to develop further its approach to using student progression, retention and achievement information in the SED. The audit team explored the University's procedures for tracking student admissions, and student progression and achievement with members of the University's Planning Office, who told it that the Office provided raw progression data to schools and that these data were also published, by school, on the University's intranet. The team found that the data covered up to five previous sessions, and consisted of successful completion numbers, withdrawals and student characteristics. Reviewing the material provided to schools, the team noted the absence of any analysis and it was unclear how student progression (for example, from year two to year three) might be established directly from the data supplied. From its meetings with members of staff in the course of the DATs, the team was able to establish that schools undertake their own analyses of these data, but that in the absence of guidance from the University, the analyses undertaken do not follow a consistent approach. The team was also able to establish that schools pass their data to LTQC but, again, it was not apparent from discussions with staff, or from the papers of LTQC, that any analyses of such data which had been conducted by schools were also provided to LTQC.

87   The University has a system of concessions whereby schools, or in certain circumstances, the Director of Undergraduate Studies, make decisions about students whose progression is not straightforward. LTQC monitors the number and nature of such concessions at each of its meetings. It also monitors similar information for postgraduate taught and research students. The audit team found evidence that this approach was working well in contributing to consistency of treatment and approach across the University and that it provided some information on progression. Other information bearing on progression is provided in annual reports published by the Counselling Service and the Careers Service. These reports are also considered by LTQC.

88   At University level, the audit team found considerable amounts of data are reported to LTQC. There was only patchy evidence of trend analysis or other systematic approaches to analysing these data, however. The team discussed how such data and reports were used by the University with members of the University throughout the visit, and came to share the view of the University itself that 'management

information is hard to come by and often unexploited'. In the team's view the University should take the advantage offered by its forthcoming review of its student and management information arrangements to develop a systematic approach to gathering data and information on student progression and achievement, institution-wide, to inform policies and actions. It may, therefore, wish to consider the advisability, as a matter of priority, of reviewing at University level the data routinely collected by and from schools, with a view to ensuring that information can be reliably and consistently generated from such data to inform its understanding and management of the academic well-being of its provision, and the security of its academic awards.

Assurance of the quality of teaching staff, appointment, appraisal and reward

89   The SED stated that responsibility for assuring the quality of teaching staff rested primarily with the dean of the relevant school acting in accordance with the University's Human Resources (HR) Strategy and associated University policies. The HR Strategy, which has been approved by HEFCE, identifies the University's staff as its single most important and valuable asset, and the University's Corporate Plan states that it will motivate and develop its academic staff to achieve international distinction in their field, and all its staff to achieve high-quality practice. To carry forward its HR strategy the University has instituted a series of policies and procedures for the recruitment, induction, appraisal and reward of staff.

90   The SED emphasised the University's commitment to research-led learning and teaching and considers that further strengthening its research-led mission should help to attract and retain staff of high-calibre. In support of this aim, in 2000 the SED stated that the University had commissioned an internal report on Research-Led Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and that at the time of the audit, resources had been identified to 'champion this strategic aim and raise awareness, stimulate debate and document practice.

91   In the recruitment of lecturing staff, one of the aims supported by LTQC is the improvement of the teaching environment, again with the intention of making employment with the University attractive to potential teachers. The University has recently adopted a policy of appointing all new lecturers to the Lecturer B scale in order to 'improve the quality of applicants'. In the course of its meetings with staff in the DATs and through scrutiny of recruitment and appointment materials the audit team was able to confirm that this is the case.

92   Probationer lecturers are assigned a mentor by the dean of the relevant school, usually for the period of their probation. As well as being a source of information and advice, the mentor assists the probationer in developing their Professional Development Plan as an integral part of their work for the Postgraduate Programme in Higher Education Practice (PGPHEP) (see below, paragraph 100). Probationers and mentors who met the audit team were enthusiastic supporters of the mentoring system and the opportunities it provided for interaction between the newly appointed and more experienced members of the teaching staff. The team came to the view that the University's mentoring arrangements provide excellent support for new members of the teaching staff and should be seen as an instance of good practice.

93   The University offers Awards of Excellence in Teaching, in recognition of commitment to and quality of teaching and learning and its enhancement. Teaching fellowships are offered each year with awards of up to £5,000 to foster innovations in teaching and learning. Extra increments have been added to the University's senior lecturer scale to recognise and reward excellent teaching, and the University has an established policy on entitlement to study leave and/or leave of absence. The audit team discussed the University's recruitment and appointment procedures with members of the teaching staff at all levels throughout the visit. In all cases it found staff were appreciative and supportive of these initiatives. Overall, it seemed to the team that these policies and initiatives were working well, although it did find some variation in the application of the study leave policy among the schools. In particular, the University's teaching fellowships appeared to have been warmly welcomed and to have made a positive contribution to enhancing teaching.

94   The University has devised a single 'Staff Appraisal and Development Scheme' for all staff groups. All staff participate in the appraisal process. Staff who are newly appointed are appraised annually while more experienced staff can opt for biennial review. Staff from all groups who met the audit team were of the view that appraisal was a positive experience, clearly linked to their personal development.

95   The University publishes a booklet with its rules and procedures for confirmation, promotion and salary review for academic staff. This information is also available on the University intranet. Teaching staff from across the University confirmed that such information was readily available and found it to be clearly expressed. Within these procedures, anyone seeking promotion to senior lecturer must either

demonstrate excellence in teaching with satisfactory research activity or considerable merit in teaching and research, reinforcing the University's commitment to research-led teaching. The SED stated that the University was considering how best to respond to the needs of mid-career teaching staff, and how to encourage a greater number of staff to engage in a broader range of continuing professional development. It noted that some progress had been made in reviewing the portfolio of offerings from the Centre for Staff and Educational Development (CSED). The team encourages the University to continue this work, especially the extension of opportunities to participate in the PGPHEP to mid-career staff. The work of CSED is considered further below.

96   Overall, the audit team came to the view that the University's arrangements for the appointment, appraisal and reward of its teaching staff were working effectively; they were carefully monitored and their description in the SED had been fair and accurate. Across the University there appeared to be some variation in the way particular policies, such as for study leave, were applied by individual schools but, in general, teaching staff who met the team were satisfied with the framework of policies and arrangements the University has established. The University's arrangements for mentoring newly appointed members of its teaching staff appeared to the team to constitute a feature of good practice.

Assurance of the quality of teaching through staff support and development

97   The University makes general provision for staff development through its CSED, which is headed by the Director of Quality Enhancement and Innovation. CSED provides an extensive range of training courses aimed at all levels of staff and their personal and professional development. In addition to providing induction courses for new staff, the CSED also provides new deans of schools with training for their particular role, and orientation sessions on teaching in the UK for international teachers and teaching assistants. A continuing series of seminars on innovations in higher education is provided and staff who met the audit team commented favourably on the quality, relevance and breadth of provision by the CSED. The team considers that the work of the CSED provided many features and instances of good practice.

98   In addition to the regularly scheduled training and support provided by CSED, training sessions are provided for administrative and clerical/secretarial staff by the Academic Division, and there is a training

programme for staff in the Admissions Office. In the course of its discussions with members of the University throughout the briefing visit and the audit visit, and from its reading of the University's papers, the audit team considered it was possible that members of the University's Academic Division did not encounter their peers in other institutions with the frequency which would enable them to benefit more fully from the experience and good practice of others.

99   The University provides mandatory training for new research supervisors, including contract research staff. It supports postgraduate research students through supervisory teams, led by a primary supervisor. The University considers all such arrangements to be consistent with the University's own Code of Practice on Assuring the Quality of Research Degrees. Postgraduate research students who met the audit team confirmed the view that the research training the University provides and its supervisory arrangements work well. The team considers that the University's arrangements for providing research training and for the supervision of its research postgraduate students are consistent with the advice offered in the *Code of practice, Section 1*: *Postgraduate research programmes*, and that the University's arrangements for the supervision of its postgraduate research students constitutes a feature of good practice.

100 A range of initiatives is in place for the support and development of new members of the teaching staff. Newly appointed lecturing staff undergoing probation must attend the PGPHEP as offered by CSED and they are required to pass the postgraduate certificate stage. A teaching skills programme is also available for new part-time teaching staff and postgraduate teaching assistants. In discussions with the audit team, probationer lecturers and postgraduate teaching assistants expressed strong and enthusiastic support for these arrangements. The undergraduate students with whom the team discussed their experience of units delivered by postgraduate teaching assistants were able to confirm their satisfaction with such teaching. The team came to the view that the University's provision of training for postgraduate research students and other teaching assistants constituted a feature of good practice.

101 The University has devised guidelines for peer observation of teaching but the way that they are put into effect is at the discretion of schools. Where it was able to confirm that peer observation was taking place, the audit team found the University's guidelines were being met, although variations in implementation were apparent. The University may wish to establish for itself the extent to which schools

are undertaking peer observation of teaching, to encourage the schools to make more effective use of its guidelines for peer observation, and to consider the sharing of good practice between schools in this area. The University supports staff who wish to join the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education through payment of the initial accreditation fee for membership and with training sessions on preparing for membership.

102 Overall, while the is scope for the University to improve the awareness of members of the Academic Division of developments in cognate areas in other universities, and for it to enhance its understanding of how peer observation of teaching has been deployed across the schools, the audit team came to the view that the University's arrangements for staff support and development are well conceived and well operated. The SED, while providing a factual description of the University's arrangements in this area, underplayed the many strengths and features of good practice which the team observed.

Assurance of the quality of teaching delivered through distributed and distance methods

103 Teaching delivered through distance and distributed methods leading to the University's awards is not a major feature of UEA's provision. The SED stated that such teaching was not delivered through third parties, and that accordingly 'it falls within the purview of normal internal procedures for quality assurance arrangements, including, for example, unit evaluation by students (taught provision) formal, biennial reviews of units and quinquennial reviews of courses, annual reviews of the progress of postgraduate research students and the appointment, by UEA, of external examiners'. The audit team noted that this statement overlooked the implications of the introduction of the New Methodology.

104 The audit team reviewed the web-based materials and work packs the University provides to support its MSc in Environmental Impact Assessment. These are supported by face-to-face contact in Norwich and/or London. The team came to the view that taken together, the work packs, the web-based materials and the face-to-face teaching sessions provided satisfactory support for those following the programme of study off-campus. For those following programmes of research and study part-time in Addis Ababa and Hong Kong leading to University's PhD award, the University provides for its staff to travel to meet them, and for students to spend some time at UEA itself.

105 The University provided the audit team at its request with details of UEA programmes taught off-campus. These included certificate and diploma programmes offered throughout East Anglia through the Centre for Continuing Education; programmes in nursing and midwifery delivered at two other sites in the region; programmes delivered at the Norwich Research Park, home to a high concentration of biological researchers; and a part-time MSc in Environmental Impact Assessment, Auditing and Management Systems. All the latter had been identified in the SED, but the list also included a part-time PhD in Educational and Professional Development offered in Ethiopia under a Department for International Development contract which had not been mentioned in the SED. In the course of the visit the team was also told about a part-time PhD in Educational and Professional Development (similar to that offered in Ethiopia) offered in Hong Kong under a British Council contract.

106 The University's view of the PhD programmes in Addis Ababa and Hong Kong has been that since formal teaching is conducted face to face, albeit at UEA and abroad, they are not delivered through distance learning, nor do they constitute collaborative provision. The audit team considers that such a conclusion can only be reached on the basis of an unhelpfully narrow definition of distance learning and collaborative provision. The adoption of this narrow definition has had the effect of excluding the PhD programmes, for example, from the support of established bodies and officers such as the Validation Office and DOCCP which would be able to provide LTQC (and those providing the programmes) with an informed perspective on their quality and academic standards management.

107 In relation to any new developments, the SED expresses the expectation that the quality assurance mechanisms currently in force will continue to ensure the quality of the current provision and the academic standards of the relevant awards. The University informed the audit team that it intended to review its present arrangements for collaborative, flexible and distance learning (including e-learning). The team welcomes this development and advises the University, as a matter of priority, to review and enhance, where necessary, its quality management and academic standards arrangements for distance and distributed learning, especially for those of its students whose learning (wholly or in part) is delivered by such means overseas.

108 Systematic use of distributed learning on the campus is largely confined to use of a proprietary virtual learning environment (VLE) system. Newly appointed academic staff are introduced to the VLE

through its use on the compulsory PGPHEP and some schools were beginning to exploit the possibilities it offered. The University's VLE was also being used by the University's Careers Centre.

Learning support resources

109 The University's Library, Information Technology and Computing Services (ITCS) and Audio-visual Services are managed as a central service by the Information Services Directorate. The University's quality management arrangements for its Library services include a Library and Learning Resources Committee (LLRC), and there is an equivalent IT and Computing Committee (ITCC) which provides an overview and reporting structure for IT services. Schools, central units and students are represented on LLRC and ITCC.

110 The SED described the University's Library holdings, facilities and opening hours, and indicated the scope of the University's budget for library acquisitions. In addition to the main Library building at Norwich there are nursing and midwifery libraries at the University's Hellesdon and King's Lynn sites, and additional journal and IT resources for postgraduate research students distributed throughout the University. At school level, library staff attend meetings of school teaching committees and equivalent bodies.

111 The Library provides a regular programme of training sessions for students and staff delivered by specialist subject librarians. These are tailored to subject needs and also provide training in the use of the catalogues and in searching electronic resources. The audit team found clear evidence that user surveys are considered and discussed by the LLRC, and noted with interest the University's general willingness to respond to annual monitoring and other kinds of feedback on the learning environment and to make improvements. The good relationships and practical arrangements which exist between members of the Library and staff and students at school level appeared to the team to constitute a feature of good practice.

112 The Information Services Directorate undertakes annual surveys of users of each of the services for which it is responsible. Postgraduate research students are invited to contribute their evaluations of using the University's library, IT and laboratory facilities in the course of the annual monitoring process which the University operates for its research postgraduate students (see below, paragraph 122). There is provision for information on the University's learning environment to be sought in the course of the University's New Methodology reviews at unit and course level and the University's standard form

which proposers of new programmes are required to complete, provides opportunities for the identification of new learning resources, or for the extension of existing resources which the new programme might require, and for the opinions of the relevant specialist services within the University to be sought. The information Services Directorate is represented on LTQC which thereby has direct access to specialist advice on key aspects of the University's learning environment.

113 ITCS is responsible for the provision and maintenance of central computing and IT resources across the University, and for the supply and expert support of IT and related equipment and services, and has established an IT users Consultative Committee (ITCC). These support arrangements are supplemented by IT provision underwritten separately by some schools. The audit team discussed the University's library and IT arrangements with students and staff in the course of the visit. In general, both were satisfied with the service they received and the team was able to confirm that service-level agreements had been concluded with the schools, although liaison between ITCS and schools appeared less effective than that conducted by members of the Library. A Library Consultative Committee has also been established, with a University-wide membership which included four student representatives. Students and staff also expressed broad satisfaction with the IT resources available to them. The team was able to confirm that use of the University's VLE was patchy among schools. In the course of one DAT the team was able to follow how a difficulty with some specialist software had been identified, communicated to ITCS and (after some delay) resolved.

114 The SWS expressed broad satisfaction with the library provision available to students while noting some areas for improvement. Similarly, students expressed broad satisfaction with IT provision, although here the Students' Union questionnaire survey suggested that rather more students, albeit from a small number of schools, expressed a lower level of satisfaction. Overall, from its meetings with staff and students, the audit team found that they were generally satisfied with the University's library services. In the case of IT services, satisfaction was more patchy and the team noted that concerns had recently been expressed in ITCC about the adequacy of the University's internal networks. This is a matter which no doubt the University is working hard to resolve. As it does so, it might be desirable for the University to review its arrangements, independent of ITCS, for establishing and monitoring the extent to which ITCS is meeting the needs of staff and students.

Academic guidance, support and supervision

115 The SED set out the University's view that the provision of guidance and support systems is organised at school level, supported by central University-wide services, and highlighted the role of the 'adviser' in guidance and support arrangements. Within schools, each undergraduate is allocated to an adviser, who is a member of the teaching staff and is expected to provide the student with 'help and advice on any problems or concerns, both academic and non-academic'. Each taught postgraduate student is also allocated to an adviser; additionally, where the programme of study requires the completion of a dissertation, a supervisor will be appointed. The University's 'central network of student support, advisory and counselling, health, welfare and financial hardship services' is coordinated by the Office of the Dean of Students (ODS). ODS liaises with advisers in the schools through the relevant senior adviser in each school (see below). In addition to his responsibilities for University-level student guidance and support arrangements the Dean of Students also has responsibilities for disciplinary matters.

116 The University's expectations of the role of an undergraduate adviser are defined in a policy statement approved by Senate in 1994. This sets out the minimum availability arrangements for consultation, the need for advisers to be familiar with the University's regulations, the duty to encourage advisees to plan their degree courses, and to give guidance on unit enrolment and to draw to the attention of the dean of school any factors that may affect the performance of an advisee in any assessment. The policy statement explicitly recognises that there may be variation between schools in their implementation of these recommendations.

117 Arrangements for advisers in each school are coordinated by a 'senior adviser' whose function is to act as the link between the school and the ODS (see above). The role of senior adviser therefore brings together academic, welfare and discipline responsibilities. Schools which deliver practice-based courses have additional arrangements for supporting their students when away from campus, such as the 'link lecturer' appointed for this purpose by the School of Midwifery and Nursing.

118 The SED noted that the University had identified some variability in the operation of the adviser system and that LTQC had undertaken a thorough review of its working. This had resulted in a report 'Review of the Undergraduate Advising System at UEA' (2002) an electronic copy of which was

provided for the audit team with the SED. The main findings of this review showed strong support for the adviser system from both academic staff and students, with 93 per cent of student respondents considering it necessary to have an adviser, and staff and students being in agreement regarding the most important aspects of the adviser role. The report of the review also noted that 'although all Schools start from the same policy statement the organisation and operation of the advising system differs as a result of staff/student ratios and different patterns of teaching'. The review found significant variability in adviser/advisee ratios, ranging from less than 10 students per member of staff to 44 or more and also found that there was significant variability in the operation of the system within and between schools, with some advisers 'giving time and thought to helping individual advisees', whereas others may show 'apparent indifference'. The SWS noted that the review had raised a number of pertinent matters but indicated disappointment that the report had fallen 'short of making recommendations as to how the system could be strengthened to provide students with the support necessary'. At the time of the audit the University had recently set up a working group to discuss developing recommendations arising out of the review report, but this had yet to meet.

119 The audit team discussed the adviser system with students' representatives during the briefing visit and with students more generally during the visit. It was told that the University's policy was that students should see their adviser at least four times a year, but that the application of this policy varied from school to school, and that there was a general perception among students that the onus rested with the student, rather than the adviser, to ensure that meetings took place. This perception was consistent with the terms of the University leaflet produced by the ODS introducing students to the adviser system. Students who met the team in the course of the DATs were generally satisfied with the advice and support provided by advisers, and with the availability of the latter to students. Students were also able to confirm that advisers were involved in following up instances of unexplained absence or failure to submit coursework. In one DAT the team was told that the relevant school had introduced the procedure of returning coursework to students through the adviser in order to encourage discussion about progress. The team considered this to be an instance of good practice.

120 In addition to support provided for undergraduate students through the adviser system,

the University also operates a small-scale central learning support service staffed by learning support tutors, and an English Language Support Programme for international students which offers a range of services including individual reviews of academic writing skills; open workshops; email help; a 'Learning Links' web site and a range of leaflets. The University employs two learning support tutors who see students referred to them by advisers; use of these services is monitored and reported to LTQC. The English Language Support Programme for international students is provided by the Centre for English Language and British Studies in the School of Language, Linguistics and Translation Studies. The SED noted that the Centre was being expanded with a view to providing more language support for international students.

121 The SWS noted that supervision arrangements for taught postgraduate students were generally satisfactory during undergraduate semesters, but observed that taught postgraduate students might experience difficulties in contacting a dissertation supervisor outside times identified for undergraduate teaching, and that this might be particularly difficult in the summer when taught postgraduate students were preparing their dissertations. The University might wish to keep this matter under review.

122 Supervision arrangements for research postgraduates are governed by the University's Code of Practice on Assuring the Quality of Research Degrees, the provisions of which had recently been reviewed. Changes resulting from this review are to be implemented in 2003-04 and will allow the University to update its arrangements with reference to the *Code of practice*, for example. The University's current arrangements for its research postgraduates provide for the establishment of a supervisory team, led by a primary supervisor with responsibility for ensuring continuity of guidance for the research student, and for liaison between the supervisory team, the student, the school and other parts of the University. Supervisory teams are expected to include at least two research-active teachers in the University and formal supervisory meetings are expected to take place at least once every three months. Supervisory teams are required to produce an annual review of each students' progress which incorporates a written submission by the student.

123 The University's GSA contributed to the SWS. The latter commented on the level of supervision for research students, noting that overall it was of a high standard, but that some research students had experienced difficulties in maintaining contact with the supervisory team when the primary supervisor had

been required to be away from the University for extended periods. Members of the University acknowledged that such difficulties had arisen in the past and told the audit team that these, and related matters, had been addressed in revising the Code of Practice on Assuring the Quality of Research Degrees. Under the terms of the revised Code, which is now mandatory, the University is required to monitor and enforce its provisions. Meetings in the course of the DATs with members of the team and full and part-time research students enabled the team to confirm that supervisory arrangements operated by the schools worked in line with the expectations of UEA's (current) Code of Practice and that students were generally satisfied with the level of support they received from supervisory teams (see above, paragraph 99).

Personal support and guidance

124 At School level, arrangements for personal support, like academic guidance, are based on the adviser system. As noted above, ODS is responsible for the coordination of centrally provided student support, careers, counselling, health, welfare and financial hardship services. The range of support services offered has gradually been expanded with the development of support posts to meet specific needs; such posts include the International Student Adviser, a Disability Coordinator, a Dyslexia Support Tutor and the learning support tutors referred to above. There is also a Senior Residential Tutor who oversees the welfare and discipline of students resident on campus. ODS produces a number of booklets outlining the services it provides in a booklet: 'Information for Parents and Guardians of New Students'.

125 As with ODS, the University's Careers Service is directly linked to LTQC of which its Director is a member ex officio. A Skills Development Adviser is based in the Careers Service who liaises with schools and advises on matters relating to key skills in the curriculum in relation to future employment. The Careers Service also provides specialist software which allows students to undertake a profiling exercise in relation to different employment areas. Members of the University told the audit team that the Careers Service had mapped its provision against the recommendations of the *Code of practice, Section 8: Career education, information and guidance,* and had produced a formal progress plan aimed at ensuring that its arrangements are consistent with those of the *Code*. The operation of the Careers Service is monitored through an annual report presented to the LTQC.

126 The audit team discussed with students the support they received from the Careers Service. It was told that members of the Service visited the schools to give presentations and that the Service sent frequent email messages to students to remind them of visits by employers ('the Milk Round'), job opportunities and advice sessions, for example, for writing curricula vitae. The SWS suggested that the volume of emails sent by the Careers Service to students had had a negative effect and that at the time of the visit the Service had responded to these comments by substituting a single weekly bulletin for separate emails. This appeared to the team to demonstrate the responsiveness of the Service to the views of its users, and the evident close work of the Service with the schools represents a feature of good practice.

127 The review of the adviser system referred to in paragraph 118 had also dealt with the provision of personal support and guidance at school level, and had noted some variability in the way personal support and guidance was offered by individual members of staff within schools and between schools. The audit team discussed the contribution of advisers to the provision of personal support and guidance with students during the visit. Students, including taught postgraduate and research students who met the team in the course of the DATs, spoke positively of the pastoral aspect of the adviser system. Students who had returned to the University from studying abroad commented favourably on the levels of contact schools and their advisers had maintained during their time abroad. In one instance this had included the provision of 'newsletters' keeping them informed of activities within their school.

128 The SWS commented that over 80 per cent of students using the University's centrally provided dyslexia or disability support services were broadly satisfied and noted students' satisfaction with, and strong support for, the work of the Counselling Service. The SWS did, however, draw attention to the workload of the Counselling Service, and the audit team noted from the most recent annual report of the Service that the number of student clients had continued to rise. The team noted with interest that the Counselling Service's capacity to provide longer-term support for student clients had been extended by making available additional support from counsellors-in-training with the University so that other staff do not have to be diverted from more urgent, short-term, counselling. This appeared to the team to constitute a pragmatic approach.

Collaborative provision

129 UEA is the main provider of higher education in a wide area of East Anglia and has developed collaborative arrangements with further education colleges and other HEIs across the region as means of

giving effect to its regional role, and enhancing access to higher education. The further development of off-campus and collaborative provision is one of the objectives of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy (see above, paragraph 24).

130 The SED stated that the University had established formal collaborative arrangements with three local-based institutions and one based in London. The University has established a franchise arrangement with Lowestoft College for the delivery of a foundation course in science and validates undergraduate programmes of study leading to its awards at certificate, foundation, degree and taught postgraduate levels at Otley College of Agriculture and Horticulture. In London, UEA validates undergraduate and graduate taught programmes at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. The University has also reached an accreditation arrangement with Suffolk College, under which the latter validates undergraduate programmes of study that lead to the University's awards. In addition to these programmes, the University has separate arrangements with Suffolk College for the latter to deliver taught postgraduate programmes validated by the University and leading to its awards.

131 Responsibility for overseeing and managing the University's collaborative arrangements rests with LTQC, on behalf of Senate, which is charged by the University's Handbook with the responsibility of 'ensuring compliance with the QAA requirements for collaborative provision' and with monitoring '…standards and the quality of learning and teaching for all taught and research awards and for validated programmes'. The conduct of collaborative arrangements is governed by the Handbook and their monitoring is undertaken on behalf of the University by the Validation Office, part of the LTQO. The Handbook incorporates the quality assurance arrangements for the University's collaborative provision. The SED stated the University's view that the Handbook and the arrangements it describes are consistent with the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision*. The Handbook addresses, *inter alia*, the negotiation and formulation of agreements and their operation, the review of agreements, and the locus of responsibility for quality management. The University's expectation is that each of its collaborative arrangements is regulated by means of an institutional agreement which identifies the locus of responsibility for quality management and the academic standards of awards between the partners. Institutional agreements are normally valid for five years.

132 LTQC receives a regular report from the Validation Office on validation activities. The monitoring role of LTQC is supported through a number of arrangements which include designated advisers and joint boards of study. Each programme or group of programmes is allocated a UEA adviser from a cognate subject area who reports annually to the Validation Officer and to the appropriate joint board of study. This is seen as being a significant role in that 'the UEA Adviser will be the prime link between the course and the University between validation and re-validation'. The Handbook requires that joint boards of study be established between each partner institution and the University. Each joint board of study is chaired by the DOCCP who is also a member of LTQC . In addition, there is a Validation Forum with a broader membership of the colleges and a remit to 'promote links within the wider region and to disseminate experience and good practice'.

133 In the case of the University's accreditation arrangements with Suffolk College, the structures are slightly different in recognition of the expectation that Suffolk College will be responsible for managing its own internal quality management arrangements. Hence, in this instance there are two joint committees: the Joint Academic Planning Forum and the Joint Academic Committee, the former having a strategic role while the latter has responsibility for quality management, is chaired by the University's DOCCP and reports to LTQC. For programmes offered through the University's accreditation arrangement with Suffolk College, the appointment of the external examiner for each programme is approved by a Director of Studies, and external examiners report to the Principal and to the Vice-Chancellor. Reports from external examiners attached to programmes at Suffolk College are considered by the relevant joint boards of study and outcomes are reported to LTQC by the DOCCP. The SED considered that these processes demonstrated a '…vigilant approach to quality and standards'.

134 The audit team was provided with documentation primarily regarding the operation of two of these arrangements: those of Suffolk College and Otley College. These included detailed documentation for the revalidation process of a programme of studies at Otley College. From the papers made available to it, the team was satisfied that the process of development and validation had been carefully conducted and that the reporting arrangements, through the relevant joint board of study to the University's LTQC, had been rigorous and effective.

135 Papers and information provided for the audit team showed that the University's partner institutions had taken care to map the quality management and academic standards arrangements

against the academic infrastructure, including the precepts of the *Code of practice* which address collaborative provision and that reports of such mappings had been considered by the relevant joint boards of studies. Members of the teaching staff from one of the University's partner institutions who met the team in the course of one of the DATs, were able to confirm that these arrangements were in place and working well, and spoke warmly of the contribution made to their work by the University's adviser. The team came to the view that the University's arrangements to underpin its relations with its local partner institutions were sound and constituted a feature of good practice.

136 The 1998 report suggested that the University could enhance its own quality management arrangements by observing how those of its partners worked. The audit team was interested to note that the University's DOCCP attended the Quality Management and Enhancement Committee of Suffolk College, and that the College's Dean of Quality Enhancement was a member of LTQC, ex officio. There was evidence to show that procedures and documentation from the College (for example, entry and exit surveys of students) were being adopted or used to inform the University's own procedures. The University's link with the David Yellin Teachers' College in Israel was the focus of an overseas audit report in 1999 and has since ended. As noted elsewhere in this report, a part-time PhD (Education and Professional Development) is delivered by visiting University staff in Hong Kong where it is recognised by the Government for purposes of employment. Hong Kong-based students visit the University in Norwich. A similar programme is offered in Addis Ababa (see above, paragraph 104).

137 In addition to its relations with local partner institutions, the University has also established a number of institutional agreements with HEI partners overseas. UEA students may spend a semester or a year abroad as part of their programme, some under ERASMUS/ SOCRATES arrangements and others in North America or Australasia. The University's Recruitment and Admissions Office liaises with overseas HEIs where students spend a semester or a year. It helps in negotiating agreements with the HEIs and briefs ERASMUS coordinators, but schools operate the agreements and advise students; for example, there is a dedicated Year Abroad Office in the School of Language, Linguistics and Translation Studies. The audit team was told that University programmes which involve a year in North America or Australasia are developed and negotiated in detail by schools and then processed through the

arrangements described in paragraph 131 for scrutiny and approval.

138 The evidence available to the audit team indicates that the University's procedures for managing its collaborative provision with colleges in its region are appropriate, well-understood and carefully operated. The University's collaborative provision with its partner colleges extends the range of higher education in the region to the benefit of students and provides opportunities for the University and its partners to share good practice. From some of the materials provided to the team this process could be taking further; for example, the University might wish to consider the benefits of adopting clearly documented assessment procedures such as those operated by Otley College.

139 The audit team noted the University's statement of principle, that quality management arrangements for collaborative placement learning abroad should be equivalent to those for programmes delivered wholly on site although this is to ignore the special challenges (and risks) associated with the delivery and support of University programmes, at all levels, abroad. The University has yet to develop a formal regulatory framework such as its Code of Practice for managing the quality of programmes or parts of programmes (such as in placements) delivered abroad, and the academic standards of awards to which they give access. This would be a helpful enhancement to its present arrangements (see above, paragraph 107).

Section 3: The audit investigations: discipline audit trails

Discipline audit trails

140 In each of the selected DATs, appropriate members of the audit team met staff and students to discuss the programmes, studied a sample of assessed student work, saw examples of learning resource materials and student feedback, and studied biennial unit review reports and periodic course review reports where these were available. Their findings in respect of the academic standards of awards are as follows.

Biological sciences

141 This DAT considered undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes delivered by the School of Biological Sciences. These comprised: BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences; BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences (part-time); BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences (with a year in Europe): four-year degree; BSc (Hons)

Biological Sciences (with a year in North America): four-year degree; BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences (with a year in Australasia): four-year degree; BSc (Hons) Biochemistry; BSc (Hons) Biochemistry (part-time); BSc (Hons) Biochemistry (with a year in Europe): four-year degree; BSc (Hons) Biochemistry (with a year in North America): four-year degree; BSc (Hons) Biochemistry (with a year in Australasia): four-year degree; BSc (Hons) Biochemistry and Molecular Biology; MSc Applied Ecology and Conservation; MSc Applied Ecology and Conservation (part-time); together with the BSc (Hons) Conservation Management delivered by Otley College.

142 The documentation provided by the University to support the DAT comprised two specially written DSEDs for the UEA and Otley College provision, respectively, and the 2002-03 revalidation submission document for the Otley College programmes. Programme specifications were appended for all the programmes listed. The School Of Biological Sciences (the School) is located within the Science Group of Schools.

143 The programme specifications for the School's programmes and the Otley programme conform to the UEA format. The School's programme specifications do not make explicit reference to the *FHEQ* or *Subject benchmark statement* for biosciences, although the DSED states that the aims 'are consistent with the *FHEQ*,…for the Bachelors degrees, the aims are consistent with the Biosciences [subject] benchmark statement'. Discussions with members of staff in the course of the DAT confirmed that the external reference points had been considered in the drafting of the specifications. A rigorous mapping exercise for the Otley provision against the *Code of practice* had been undertaken in 2003. This had resulted in the production of a report and, subsequently, a detailed action plan that had been presented to the Joint Board of Study which was monitoring its progress. This process was also related to the internal review mechanisms. Members of the audit team noted that Otley College teaching staff had a clear understanding of the academic levels of progression and attainment of their programme in relation to the *FHEQ*.

144 Admission and progression statistics are collected routinely and reported to the School Board and to the Joint Board of Study for the School and Otley College, respectively, as well as being reported to the University. Likewise, the University's Careers Service collects and publishes first destination data. These figures are discussed and used; for example, student attendance and progression information is important in terms of the January Student Progress

Meeting; and action, such as the issue of 'Dean's warnings' to students at risk of failing, may be taken. The School Board also receives details of all withdrawals and the underlying reasons. It was unclear to the team, however, what use was made within the School of the data and statistical information available to enhance its provision.

145 Under the New Methodology individual units comprising the degree programmes are reviewed on an annual basis. The structure of these reports follows a general format that normally includes student performance, student feedback, examiners reports and future plans which take account of the different elements of information fed in. These reports are considered by the School Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) and the Chair confirms the completion of all reviews for the academic year. The summary outcomes of the reports are also presented to the Staff-Student Liaison Group. The USC has also been engaged in discussion regarding the operation of the new course monitoring procedures within the School. The thoroughness with which the School had conducted its first annual unit review under the New Methodology appeared to the audit team to constitute a feature of good practice.

146 As noted elsewhere in this report, degree programmes are subject to the University's quinquennial course review procedures, and the audit team was provided with the reports of two recent reviews, one of which, Biochemistry, had been conducted in 2003 under the New Methodology. The other course review, covering the MSc Applied Ecology and Conservation had been undertaken in 2002 under the University's former arrangements. Each of these quinquennial reviews had been undertaken in line with the provisions of CPATQ and external peers had participated in their work, although in the case of the MSc Applied Ecology and Conservation, the external peer had been a recently retired external examiner. Matters arising from the reviews had been taken up by LTQO and had been considered by the School's Graduate Studies and Undergraduate Studies Committees.

147 From the evidence available to the audit team it appeared that the programme at Otley was subject to a rigorous process of annual reviews and internal evaluation; this had included a report on the provision by the UEA Adviser. All the material arising from the reviews and evaluations, including the Adviser's report, had been submitted to the University's Joint Board of Study which is responsible for following up any recommendations or points for further action. Validated programmes are subject to the University's periodic revalidation process: in the

case of the BSc (Hons) Conservation Management this had last taken place in June 2003. The team was able to confirm that it had been undertaken in accordance with the regulations in the Handbook.

148 The external examiners' reports for all the above programmes have consistently approved the quality of the teaching, the appropriateness of the assessment procedures, and the academic standards attained by students. The audit team was able to confirm that the reports for the School are dealt with in accordance with the requirements of CPATQ, and that the process had been conducted in a timely manner. External examiners' reports generally confirmed that action points raised in previous years had been responded to, although reports in 2003 commented on the failure to provide clear evidence of the double-marking of examination scripts, as had been requested in the previous year.

149 Otley College responds to reports from external examiners associated with validated programmes using a standard form. External examiners appear satisfied that the College responds appropriately to their comments. The most recent examiner's reports have strongly confirmed the perceptions of the quality of the programme but have raised concerns over the College's long-term commitment to the programme: 'The programme commands great respect within the industry and this is something that should be taken notice of by the College management…'. Reports from external examiners also comment on staffing and support matters, some of which had been raised in the revalidation exercise and have been identified by the University as requiring attention. Students and staff from Otley College who met the audit team confirmed that these matters remained current.

150 Assessment methods employed by units and programmes are checked by Boards of Study when approving individual units. From the sample of coursework provided to support the DAT it appeared that a range of approaches is taken to assessment. Within the School, the USC takes an overview of the assessment structure, for example, it has recently instituted a review of all assessments to compare workload imbalances between students. This matter was identified in the most recent quinquennial course review and students who met the audit team confirmed that it remained a matter of concern. Students studying in more than one school who met the team in the course of the DAT also reported concerns regarding the different regulations obtaining between Schools, for example, in terms of penalties for late submission of coursework. In the case of the Otley College programmes, the team

was able to identify clear strategies for assessment and for defining levels of attainment.

151 The audit team was provided with samples of coursework and examination papers for each academic year from across the range of attainment in each of the programmes in the DAT. On the basis of the marked work provided, the team was able to confirm that students are meeting the learning outcomes identified in the programmes specifications and that the standard of achievement is appropriate to the relevant awards.

152 Each of the programmes in the sample provides a handbook for students. They contain general information and guidelines about the University and the work of the School. The handbook provided for students based at Otley College provided similar information relevant to the College. All the handbooks seen by the audit team set out what students were expected to achieve and gave generic marking criteria and learning outcomes, as well as summary information regarding each of the individual units in the programmes. The School provides students studying abroad for a year with information on developments within the programmes it offers, and the School and the University more generally, through a newsletter. This seemed to the team to be a feature of good practice.

153 Undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research students based in the School reported general satisfaction with the learning resource provision available to them in terms of equipment for practical classes and IT and library resources. The audit team was able to confirm that one of the Library's specialist librarians liaises closely with the School Library Committee on the allocation of the Library budget for the School's subject areas. The USC negotiates with the School's Finances and General Purposes Committee over the allocation of funds for teaching, and a joint IT facility has recently been developed which is shared with the School of Mathematics (see below, paragraph 167).

154 As noted above, learning resource provision for the BSc Conservation Management at Otley College was identified as a cause for concern, in the report of the 2002-03 revalidation, having previously been raised by the UEA Adviser in two annual reports. These problems have related to reductions in academic staffing and technician support as well as physical resources such as equipment for practical classes and library resourcing. Additional support for the programme has been arranged from the UEA Library and the Joint Board of Studies has taken a close interest in the learning resources available for the programme. Current students, however,

commented on the limitations to the range of practical work available to them as a consequence of the lack of technical support to maintain equipment. The audit team encourages the University and the School to continue to work with the College to resolve these difficulties.

155 The audit team was able to view a range of written feedback from students as part of the unit review process. Consideration of student views also forms part of the quinquennial course review process and (for Otley College provision) the revalidation process. Students who met the team were able to confirm that they understood how their feedback information was used and that they were told what changes had been made following the analysis of their feedback. Students at Otley College were less confident, however, that they understood how the University used their feedback information.

156 Students in the School of Biological Sciences are able to participate in the quality management work of the School at a number of levels. There is a Staff-Student Liaison Group, with year representatives, which acts as the main conduit for comments from undergraduate students regarding a broad range of matters relating to teaching and learning. Students told the audit team that they found this an effective committee which made a worthwhile contribution to their enhancement of their learning experience. They cited as an example the School's practice of producing overall summaries of feedback from units for consideration at the Staff-Student Liaison Group. Students are also represented on the School's USC and the School Board. Graduate students can participate in the quality management work of the School through its Postgraduate Students Group. Research students commented to the team on the approachability of staff and confirmed that action was taken in response to any concerns they raised.

157 The audit team was able to confirm in each instance that the quality of the learning opportunities was suitable for the programmes of study at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the School and also in the BSc Conservation Management at Otley College, although in the case of the latter continuing vigilance will be required by the University and the College to ensure that the staffing and resource levels for the programme remain appropriate. The team was also able to confirm the general view of all the students it met, and from external examiners' reports, that the academic staff of both institutions are strongly committed to the provision of high quality education and that the programmes considered are appropriate to the relevant awards.

Mathematics

158 The DAT considered undergraduate, taught postgraduate programmes and programmes of research delivered by the School of Mathematics (the School). These comprised: BSc (Hons) Mathematics full-time; BSc (Hons) Mathematics part-time; BSc (Hons) Pure Mathematics; BSc (Hons) Applied Mathematics; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with a year in Europe; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Economics; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Management Studies; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Statistics; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Environmental Science; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Meteorology; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Music; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Philosophy; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with French Language; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with German Language; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Spanish Language; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Computing; BSc Joint (Hons) Computing and Mathematics; MMath Mathematics; MMath Mathematics with a year in North America; MMath Mathematics with a year in Europe; MMath Biomathematics; Ordinary Degree in Mathematics; Graduate Diploma in Mathematics; MSc Pure Mathematics; MSc Modelling in Applied Mathematics; MSc by Research; MPhil; and PhD.

159 The School is relatively small and close-knit. The School had participated in a New Methodology quinquennial course review in 2003. The report of the course review was provided for the audit team at its request. Programme specifications were completed in November 2003. These detail educational aims, generic skills, specific aims and learning outcomes and indications of teaching/learning methods and strategies, as well as details of assessment. A feature of the School's provision is that the programmes leading to BSc (Hons) or MMath provide the opportunity for students to spend a year studying at a university abroad. Programme specifications for all the provision within the scope of the DAT were appended to the DSED which was specifically written for audit.

160 The School's Teaching Committee has responsibility for consideration of undergraduate and taught postgraduate learning, teaching and quality issues. It is located within the Science Group of Schools and, as noted elsewhere in this report, the Group's LTQE is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the University's quality assurance policies and procedures. The School's Undergraduate Teaching Coordinator is a member of the Group LTQE.

161 The DSED provided no information on how the School monitored and analysed progression and completion data, although a paper sent to the School Board in November 2003 had set out

student numbers and withdrawals, but without providing any analysis. A paper for the 2003 quinquennial course review of mathematics, dated 2001-02, provided the numbers of students who had progressed into employment and final degree classes but, again, provided no analysis. The School's use and analysis of progression and completion data represents an area ripe for further development.

162 The information provided to support the DAT included the papers of the School's Teaching Committee. These enabled the audit team to confirm the general effectiveness with which the latter carries out its responsibilities. Members of the School told the team that in addition to its formal quality management arrangements the School encourages informal contacts between members of teaching staff in support of the quality management of its provision. The DSED noted that the 1998 Agency subject review of Mathematics had identified 'an over reliance on informal methods' in the dissemination of good practice. The DSED indicated that steps had subsequently been taken to introduce greater formality into these arrangements. Evidence provided to the 2003 course review by mathematics students suggested that the latter found the School's approach to quality management effective (see below).

163 As noted above, the School participated in an internal quinquennial course review in April 2003. The report of this process indicated that the review had provided an opportunity for a wide-ranging consideration of the School's provision and that an external member who was, however, the retiring external examiner, had been appointed to the panel. The audit team was able to confirm action was being taken in line with findings from the review. Members of the School told the team that the course review had been a helpful exercise.

164 The School gives wide consideration to external examiners' reports, and formal responses are made by the relevant Course Director. Reports and action points are monitored by the School Teaching Committee. The audit team was able to confirm through discussions with staff and scrutiny of recent external examiners' reports that issues raised were acted upon and reported back to external examiners.

165 The audit team was able to scrutinise work submitted by students for assessment which had been subject to the consideration of the external examiners. This material suggested that the tasks set for students were well matched to the assessment strategies set out in the relevant programme specifications. The DSED stated the School's view that the mathematics programmes are consistent

with the *FHEQ* and indicated that the learning outcomes for undergraduate programmes are based on the relevant subject benchmark statements. While the evidence available to the team supports the view that the learning outcomes of the mathematics programmes within the DAT are consistent with the benchmarking statements, it was not clear to the team how the expectations of the *FHEQ* with respect to progression from level to level were demonstrated; for example, between the University's level 2 and level 3 units, since level 2 units can be taken in the final year of study (see above, paragraph 35).

166 From its scrutiny of marked student work the audit team was able to confirm that project work was subject to blind double-marking and to identify some evidence of moderation of marking on coursework and examination scripts. It was not clear from this evidence, however, that the moderation of marking, or second-marking, of examination scripts, coursework, or projects was consistently and routinely undertaken across the School. Comments from markers were generally evident on coursework, however, and the School also provides feedback on students' performance via email. Students who met the team indicated that they were content with the level and quality of feedback they received on their coursework.

167 Learning resources and support appeared appropriate to the audit team. A reading room has been provided for undergraduate students in which texts donated by members of staff and former students have been made available for reference. Students who met the audit team welcomed this arrangement. In partnership with the School of Biological Sciences, the School of Mathematics has jointly developed specialist IT facilities (see above, paragraph 153). Students based in the School commented on the usefulness of these facilities and were generally appreciative of the level of access they enjoyed to this laboratory and, more widely, to the University's IT facilities.

168 Student representatives attend the School's Teaching Committee and the School Board, and the School has established a Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC). Students who met the audit team, including elected student representatives, indicated they were satisfied with the School's representation arrangements and considered that the School paid attention to their views. In addition to its SSLC the School has established an innovative 'Open Forum' in which students provide feedback information through IT facilities provided by the Learning and Resources Centre. These facilities allow them to respond electronically and anonymously to questions raised by members of staff. Responses are

projected in real-time onto a screen within the facility and discussion can follow with members of staff joining in. Students appreciated this additional method for providing feedback, although some considered that there was no need for anonymity.

169 Each year the School provides its students with an updated handbook which sets out its expectations and provides programme information. The contents of the handbook also appear on the School's intranet pages. The handbook contains detailed information on assessment processes, the submission of work, and penalties for late submission. The handbook also contains a section on academic appeals and complaints which emphasises the value of seeking informal resolution of difficulties with the lecturer concerned as an initial step. The handbook also contains a section on 'Where to go for advice' which directs students to the adviser in the first instance. First-year students told the audit team that they had found the handbook to be helpful and informative; students in later years of the programmes appeared to use the handbook less frequently, and chiefly as a point of reference. Students who met the team were broadly content with the way in which the School's adviser arrangements worked.

170 A number of the School's programmes make it possible for students to spend a year abroad and, in such cases, they are provided with a specially written handbook prior to their departure. The contents of such handbooks typically include detailed information on the responsibilities of students, the University regulations that will apply to them while they are abroad, and advice on visas and travel. A particularly useful feature of these handbooks is that they contain information provided by past students who have studied abroad, and those abroad in the current session, describing partner institutions and giving information about the locality. The audit team considered that the School's approach to their provision of handbooks for Year Abroad students to be a feature of good practice.

171 The evidence available to the audit team from the School's papers including its DSED, materials on its intranet site, and from meetings with staff and students, demonstrate that the quality of learning opportunities provided by the School is suitable for programmes of study leading to the awards listed in paragraph 158 above.

Music

172 The DAT considered undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes and research programmes delivered by the School of Music (the School). These comprised: BA (Hons) Music; BA (Hons) Music with

Mathematics; BA (Hons) Music with Computing; BA (Hons) Music Performance Studies; MMus by Research; MMus Performance Studies; MPhil; and PhD.

173 The School of Music is attached to the Schools of World Art and Music (WAM) and also the School of World Art and Museology (ART). There is a single Dean for WAM and a single Board of Studies. The Head of the School of Music is the Deputy Dean of WAM. Within the School of Music there is a single Faculty Committee which includes the roles of a Teaching Committee and a Research Committee. The School is located within the Humanities Group of Schools.

174 The School provided a specially written DSED to support the DAT, together with programme specifications for the undergraduate programmes and the taught postgraduate MMus Performance Studies. At the request of the audit team, the University also provided a range of the School's internal papers, together with the report of a quinquennial course review of undergraduate and taught postgraduate provision which had been conducted in June 2003 under the University's former methodology for quinquennial course review. The University also gave the team access to a special external review of the School which it had commissioned in 2002.

175 As noted above, the DSED was accompanied by a number of programme specifications. The programme specifications for the undergraduate programmes appeared to the audit team to make appropriate reference to the *Subject benchmark statement* for music. Currently there are no subject benchmark statements directly relevant to the taught postgraduate programmes offered by the School, but the programme specification for the MMus Performance Studies appeared to the team to have suitably drawn upon key features of the benchmark statements for the undergraduate programmes.

176 The BA (Hons) Music provides for defined pathways in the key areas of performance, composition, conducting and critical musicology which make use of defined prerequisites to ensure progression in both breadth and depth. The stipulation of prerequisites is intended to ensure that the programmes of study followed by students align satisfactorily with the advice of the *FHEQ*.

177 The School's internal papers showed that it has gathered and used progression and completion data to monitor the management of quality and academic standards. For example, in 1997 the School introduced a part-time mode and, in recent years, it has been actively seeking to recruit mature students to improve access to higher education. The impact of these changes (for example, on degree

classifications and completions) has been carefully tracked by the School. A similar study of the effects on classification of variable performance in unit assessments (again informed by progression and completion data) has informed recent changes the School has made to the curriculum. The School's use of progression and completion data in quality management appeared to the audit team to constitute a feature of good practice.

178 In 2002, the University commissioned a report on the School and its staffing from an external expert from another University. Following its receipt of this report the University took steps to enhance the quality of the music degree programmes in terms of curriculum development and staffing provision. A quinquennial course review was subsequently undertaken in 2003 in two parts, one looking at the undergraduate programmes and the other at the taught postgraduate programmes. In each case the current undergraduate and taught postgraduate external examiners for music served as the external peer members. The report of the review of taught postgraduate provision appeared to the audit team to be searching, informative and helpful with respect to the School's postgraduate programmes and, in this instance, to have drawn on a significant evidence base, including external comments. The section of the report which dealt with the School's undergraduate programmes, however, appeared to be descriptive and lacking in evaluation. There was no evidence in the report overall that feedback from students, or that the annual reports from tutors on individual units, had been considered. On the evidence of this report, further work to enhance the University's quinquennial course review procedures would be justified.

179 The reports of external examiners and the School's internal papers indicate that recommendations in the former are dealt with conscientiously. The DSED was able to point to a number of changes and improvements to the curriculum in terms of content, delivery and assessment which had been made in response to comments from external examiners. For example, comments from external examiners had led the School to introduce a compulsory level 2 unit, Critical Skills in Music, building on earlier units and strengthening the theoretical underpinning for project work at level 3. The School has sought to achieve the most appropriate balance between course-based assessment, projects and written examinations according to context. The audit team noted from the report of the recent quinquennial course review that in the case of one unit, Composition, 'an important aspect of assessment in this area is that a substantial

element of work to be assessed is presented in public performance'. The report of the course review also stated that 'most of the work leading to the final classification is double-marked'. The team was able to confirm that double-marking and moderation was being carried out with respect to unseen examinations, but the evidence that coursework was double-marked was inconclusive. The sample of assessed work seen by the team matched the expectations of the programme specifications and was consistent with the views of the external examiners. The team was, therefore, able to confirm that the standard of student achievement was appropriate to the titles of the awards listed in paragraph 172, above, and their location within the *FHEQ*.

180 The sample of marked assessed work also provided clear evidence that teaching staff in the School provide helpful feedback to students on their work and that this is done systematically. Students who met the audit team spoke of the support and guidance teaching staff provided, the value of project work, and the increasing opportunities to play to their individual strengths as they progress through their studies.

181 At the time of the audit 20 full and part-time students were registered for research-based degrees. The DSED stated the School's view that the 'large contingent of research students working in the Electroacoustic Music Studio form a strongly supportive community, and training is provided by a combination of in-house induction and peer-group support. The much smaller numbers of research students working in historical and critical musicology are in many cases part-time'. The School has established its own Code of Practice for the supervision of postgraduate research students which is consistent with the requirements of the University's Code of Practice and is set out in the handbook the School provides for its research students. According to the DSED, supervisory teams are required to report on the progress of research students to the Research Committee of the Schools of World Art and Music, the work of which is monitored by the LTQE of the Humanities and Social Sciences Group. The DSED stated that the School's Planning and Estimates Committee 'fulfils in its meetings the roles of Teaching Committee and Research Committee'. The audit team was unable to identify any references to reviews of the progress of research students in the papers of this Committee.

182 In addition to the handbooks it provides for students, the School has developed a site on the University's intranet through which it provides detailed information on the content of units and

also a comprehensive range of support materials. The audit team noted that the software used by the School to develop this facility was not compatible with the VLE software adopted by the University. The significance of any problems which might arise from this incompatibility had yet to be assessed.

183 The School provides some specialised learning resources itself, for example, an Electroacoustic Music Studio which students were able to confirm met their needs. Similarly, in the case of the Library and most centrally provided learning support services, students were broadly content with the support they received. In the case of IT provision, however, students who met the audit team were less satisfied. Some complained that the number of networked PCs available was insufficient, others drew attention to the difficulties the School had encountered in making available a leading proprietary software package used for teaching and learning in music notation writing. Discussions with members of staff confirmed that the provision of the latter software remained problematic and that support from ITCS for this specialised software package had not been satisfactory, but that these problems had now been resolved. The University will wish to keep under review liaison and support arrangements between ITCS and the schools.

184 The small size of the School facilitates good staff-student relations, with high levels of informal contact between tutors, administrative and support staff and students. Those students who met the audit team were content with the School's current quality management arrangements, including their capacity to provide feedback on their learning experiences to staff. A negative feature of the School's reliance on informal means of quality management, however, is that they provide little evidence to support the processes of unit review, course update and course review. More particularly, the School's culture of informality appears to have constrained the development and reduced the potential value of the SSLC. The University and the School may wish to work together to review the balance to be struck between informal and formal methods in the School's quality management of its provision and to ensure that the SSLC provides an effective channel of communication between students and the School.

185 The evidence available to the audit team from the School's papers including its DSED, materials on its intranet site, and from meetings with staff and students, demonstrate that the quality of learning opportunities provided by the School is suitable for programmes of study leading to the awards listed in paragraph 172 above.

Literature

186 The DAT comprised undergraduate and research postgraduate programmes provided by the Literature and Creative Writing Sector (the Sector), within the School of English and American Studies (the School) leading to the following award titles: BA (Hons) English Literature; BA (Hons) English Literature (part-time); BA (Hons) English Literature with Creative Writing; BA (Hons) English Studies; MPhil; PhD in English Literature; and Creative and Critical Writing. The Sector offers no taught postgraduate programmes in the areas within the scope of the DAT.

187 The DAT was supported by a DSED specially written for the audit based on the following headings: educational aims, evaluation of learning outcomes, evaluation of the curriculum and assessment, and the quality of learning opportunities. Programme specifications were provided with the DSED for the undergraduate awards and the report of a quinquennial course review conducted in 2001 was also made available. The School is located within the Humanities Group of Schools.

188 The programme specifications appeared to the audit team to be consistent with the *Subject benchmark statement* for English and were based on the templates recently developed by the University as it prepares to meet the requirements of HEFCE for the publication of teaching quality information. The University's template provides for statements of learning outcomes for each programme; it does not, however, provide for the inclusion of learning outcomes, based on differentiated levels of student progression. This would have allowed the programme specifications to be more closely aligned to the *FHEQ*, and demonstrate more easily adherence to the 'concept of progression so that the curriculum imposes an increasing level of demand on the learner during the course of the programme', as suggested in the *Code of practice* (see above, paragraph 35).

189 Progression and completion data were made available in an appendix to the DSED, but there was little discussion or analysis of such data within the document itself, other than to point to low dropout rates among undergraduate students. As noted above, in 2001 a quinquennial course review was conducted in which the current external examiner for literature participated as the 'external' peer. The report of the review indicated that the Sector on the School had raised concerns with respect to 'grade inflation' in the context of a rise in the number of First class awards and a simultaneous decline in the number of Lower Second class awards (see below). The report of the course review provided no other information but stated that 'the externals, have...repeatedly expressed their sense that academic standards are being

maintained'. The audit team was able to confirm that the external examiners remained of this view.

190 Under the University's New Methodology the School is required to consider student achievement on an annual basis for each unit. This takes place through the School's Teaching Committee where, among other information, detailed evaluation and classification statistics for each unit are received and discussed. The audit team considered that the annual review of units conducted by the School under the New Methodology was working satisfactorily, and that there was evidence in the form of changes to the curriculum to suggest that annual review was providing a helpful stimulus to the enhancement of units. Similarly, the papers produced by and for the 2001 quinquennial course review, and discussions with members of their School, suggested to the team that the course review had occasioned a constructive dialogue between the School and the Group LTQE throughout the process and following the completion of the report and that, in this instance, the course review process had provided a helpful stimulus to the enhancement of the provision.

191 As noted elsewhere in this report, the University requires all external examiners reports and draft responses from schools to be sent to the relevant Group LTQE, which may request a detailed response to specific points. Evidence seen by the audit team suggests that responses from the School to reports from external examiners had been monitored by the Group LTQE.

192 The University's advice to schools on assessment strategies allows them considerable discretion to decide the approach they wish to adopt. The audit team found that the Sector used a range of assessment strategies which, from the sample scrutinised, seemed to provide appropriate means to evaluate completion of the learning outcomes for each unit. In relation to the conduct of assessments leading to awards, the team noted that in a recent report, an external examiner had stated that it had not always been possible to confirm that scripts had been double marked. From the sample of marked examination scripts provided to support the DAT, the team was able to confirm the substance of these concerns. The team discussed this matter with members of the Sector who confirmed that they were aware that it was University policy for examination scripts to be double-marked, and that they were endeavouring to meet this requirement. This is a matter which the University will wish to monitor closely. The team was able to confirm that the standard of student achievement in programmes leading to the awards listed in paragraph 186 is appropriate to the titles of the awards and their location within the *FHEQ*.

193 Students who met the audit team considered that the Sector's approach to granting extensions of deadlines for the submission of coursework and its application of penalties for late submission of coursework, did not always conform to published policies, with the consequence that some students appeared to have been treated unfairly. Members of the teaching staff acknowledged some inconsistency in the application of the policies published in the handbooks provided for students, and told the team that it was their intention to ensure that these matters were handled with greater consistency in the future. Students told the team that they valued the detailed and helpful feedback on their performance and written work that they received from members of the Sector. The team noted that it was not presently the University's policy to use assessment criteria in providing feedback, but that through LTQC it was considering what advice it might offer schools on the provision of feedback and comments on coursework for the future.

194 The audit team noted that the standard forms used by the Sector to gather students' views on units provided opportunities for the latter to comment on the adequacy of the learning resources provided to support units and programmes. The team discussed with students and staff in the Sector the learning resources available to them. In each case they were broadly satisfied with the support they received from the Library and staff and students appeared to the team to enjoy a good working relationship with the relevant subject librarian. The School told the team that it had begun to make use of the VLE software acquired by the University, and that staff make intensive use of the University's email system to communicate with students. Overall, it appeared to the team that the Sector was making good use of IT to enhance the learning opportunities available to its students and that its work in this area represented a feature of good practice.

195 Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students discussed their access to advisers with members of the audit team and expressed general satisfaction with their School's adviser arrangements. Members of the team also discussed supervision arrangements for research postgraduate students with the latter and members of staff who described the School's expectation that four supervisory sessions should take place each year, usually in October, December, March and May. Research students were able to confirm that supervision was monitored through an annual questionnaire which they completed and which was reviewed each year by the supervisory team for the Sector. Staff also

told the team that the supervisory load across the School was carefully monitored, and that new members of the teaching staff received training and support before being identified to act as supervisors. Research students who discussed supervisory arrangements within the School were aware of the University's Code of Practice for research supervision and considered that their supervisors adhered to it.

196 The School and the Sector provided a sample of undergraduate and postgraduate student handbooks in the information to support the DAT. On the basis of this sample it seemed to the audit team that the handbooks set out the responsibilities of students and staff clearly, and described the procedures students might expect to be applied if coursework was submitted after the stated deadline which appeared to the team to be in accordance with University guidelines (see above). The student handbooks seen by the team also provided information on the University's procedure for lodging an appeal against an academic decision, on the marking policies followed by the Sector, and offered guidance on where to find further information. In general, the handbooks seen by the team accurately represent the University's approach to matters such as coursework submission although, as noted above, this does not conform to the practice of the Sector as experienced by students. For first-year students, the Sector also provides a Skills Protocol document which offers guidance on referencing and bibliographical skills. An English Stylebook is available for consultation on the School's intranet site. The School and the Sector make intensive use of email and the School's intranet to communicate with students, and this seemed to the team to constitute a feature of good practice.

197 As part of the evidence to support the DAT, the Sector provided recent examples of student feedback on units. From these the audit team noted that student respondents provided detailed, helpful and, occasionally, critical feedback on their experience as learners. There appeared, however, to be no consistent grounds for concern and most units had received approving comments from students. The latter told the team that the response they received from the Sector to their feedback varied but that they were generally satisfied that the Sector treated their feedback as a valuable source of information.

198 The School has established a 'teaching quality' section on its intranet site, which emphasises the importance it places on students' evaluations of their learning experiences and the discussions to which they lead. Students who met the audit team were confident that their views were taken into consideration when the School made decisions. For example, they cited a proposal by the School's Teaching Committee to withdraw a popular unit which they had opposed, resulting in the retention of the unit. From the evidence available it appeared to the team that students were actively involved by the School and the Sector in the quality management of the programmes of study they offer.

199 The evidence available to the audit team from papers provided by the School and the Sector including the DSED, materials on its intranet site, and from meetings with staff and students, demonstrate that the quality of learning opportunities provided by the School is suitable for programmes of study leading to the awards listed in paragraph 186 above.

Business and management

200 The DAT considered undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate programmes delivered by the School of Management (the School). These comprised: BSc (Hons) Business Management; BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance; BSc (Hons) Accounting with Law; BSc (Hons) Accounting with Management; MSc Business Management; MSc Marketing; MSc E-Business; MBA (part-time); MPhil; and PhD in Management.

201 The documentation provided by the University to support the DAT comprised a specially written DSED, to which programme specifications for programmes leading to all the awards listed above were appended. The School participated in an Agency subject review in February 2001, the scope of which was the same as for the DAT. Under the University's New Methodology arrangements the School is due to participate in a quinquennial course review later in the 2003-04 session. Although the School contributes to other programmes of study, the programmes included within the DAT constitutes the core of its teaching. The School is located within the Health and Professional Group of Schools. It reports to the Group LTQE on which it is represented. The School is also represented on LTQC. The School has close links to professional bodies in accountancy and to the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

202 The programme specifications appended to the DSED followed the template provided by the University. From the wording of these it was clear to the audit team that the *Subject benchmark statement* for accounting, and also general business and management, and masters awards in business and management, had been referred to. The programme specifications name the particular professional bodies recognising specific courses, although they do not articulate the specific

requirements to obtain the relevant levels of exemption and/or recognition. This information was, however, available elsewhere, and the team was satisfied that students are given clear guidance concerning their status with the respective professional bodies on completion of their studies.

203 Undergraduates in the School follow a common first year which ensures that all students cover the knowledge and skills set out in the subject benchmark statements. Units studied in the second and third years of undergraduate programmes contribute equally to the classification of the final award. However, the large number of compulsory units in the degree programmes leading to 'Accountancy with' award titles, and the extensive use of prerequisites in the broader-based business management programme, ensure that while students are encouraged to discuss the units they wish to follow with the Course Director, in practice their choices are limited. Likewise, individual taught postgraduate programmes are located within the programme framework of the *Subject benchmark statement* for masters awards in business and management. Within this framework the School's part-time MBA was identified as a post-experience career development programme (type 3).

204 Neither the DSED nor the supplementary data made available during the audit visit pointed to a systematic analysis by the School of data relating to student progression and completion, although the School was able to provide completion and first-destination statistics for recent graduates from a recently conducted survey. Evidence in the papers of the School Board and the Teaching Management Group indicated that progression and completion data were discussed within the School, and that it was in a position to provide such data if it was requested by the Group LTQE and/or LTQC. The School is confident that the measures it has put in place enable it to monitor student progress throughout the session.

205 The School made available reports for the 2000-01 and 2001-02 (biennial) review of units to support the DAT; from the current session it plans to introduce annual unit reviews following the University's New Methodology. The reports made available to the audit team for the old-style unit reviews indicated that they had contributed to the development of the curriculum. For example, the DSED described how the School had responded to student feedback and observations concerning the restricted diet of optional units available in a particular area. Elsewhere, the team found evidence in correspondence with an external examiner that the

School had become aware of the need to modify the curriculum in order to improve its articulation with the requirements of professional bodies. The quinquennial course review due later in the 2003-04 session will follow the University's New Methodology which makes greater provision for the direct consideration of reports from PSRBs, where relevant. From the evidence made available it appeared to the team to be the case that the School (through its Teaching Management Group) dealt directly with professional bodies in accounting without reference to the Group LTQE or LTQC (see above, paragraph 69).

206 The School provided reports to support the DAT from external examiners with responsibilities for programmes leading to the awards listed in paragraph 200, together with its responses. These showed that comments and advice from external examiners are considered by the Teaching Management Group. Responses to external examiners' reports are provided by the chairs of the relevant examination boards. The sample of such responses seen by the audit team suggested that the School dealt appropriately with the recommendations and comments of external examiners. The responses appeared to have been provided in line with the University's expectations. Where external examiners' reports have raised particular matters, the responses seen by the team appeared to have set out the School's views and intended actions clearly. There was evidence that the Group LTQE had monitored the reports of external examiners for the School's provision and the School's exchanges with its external examiners.

207 The modes of assessment used by the School were described in the DSED which observed that the quantitative disciplines within the School used examinations more than the qualitative disciplines and that, in part, this reflected the emphasis of the professional accountancy bodies on examinations. The part-time MBA is assessed almost entirely through coursework. Assessment criteria are made available to students through the handbooks for individual units. These set out clearly what was expected of students and the criteria by which they would be judged, and appeared to match the learning objectives set out in the documentation for relevant units.

208 To support the DAT the School provided samples of undergraduate and taught postgraduate assessed work (coursework and examination scripts) which had been seen by external examiners. Each set of examination scripts included a moderation sheet, which described both the distribution of marks and the moderation process. The description of the process was consistent with the University's stated policy on double-marking and moderation. All

dissertations are double-marked, but coursework is single marked and only a sample of 20 per cent of examination scripts is subject to scrutiny by a second marker. The sample of marked examination scripts provided to support the DAT did not include a mark sheet and there was no conclusive evidence that examination scripts in the sample had been second-marked. From the marked student work provided by the School it appeared to be the case that the standard of student achievement is appropriate to the titles of the awards listed in paragraph 200 above.

209 Across the School, units are delivered from the beginning of the session until the Easter of the following calendar year. From its scrutiny of unit handbooks and its discussions with staff and students, it seemed to the audit team to be the case that where units are not assessed by examinations alone, students might not receive feedback comments on their work for several months. For example, at the time of the audit visit in January, first-year business management students had submitted four pieces of work for assessment, but had yet to receive any feedback on their performance. While it was clear to the team that the School carefully monitored students' attendance, and that clear procedures were in place to follow up absences, the University may wish to consider whether the annual meeting on student progress, which is held by the School in January/February, is able to fulfil its function without access to marks for assessed work.

210 For students, their adviser represents a general source of academic support and their key reference point when choosing units. Students also have access to course directors for advice on such matters and specialist members of staff are available to advise on requirements of professional bodies. In addition, the School's web site and the student handbook (see below) provide information to guide students in the selection of units. Notwithstanding the information available to them, it was clear to the audit team that students were expected to take the lead in seeking the advice they required.

211 The School provides programme handbooks for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. They are supplemented by the School's intranet site through which teaching materials, course calendars and a wealth of other information are provided for students. The audit team discussed with students the information the School provides for them. They considered they were given the information they required to progress satisfactorily through their programmes of study. Students confirmed for the team that their advisers constitute the main source of information on the choice of units to follow.

212 Students who met the audit team considered that they were provided with appropriate learning resources. Undergraduate and taught postgraduate students stated that the library resources available to them met their needs. Research postgraduate students were warmly appreciative of the additional learning resources provided for them through the Library. Students working away from the campus are able to make use of the University's facilities through remote electronic links but it appeared to be the case that, other than email, students chose to use the electronic resources available to them in the Library. The School liaises with the Library through designated contacts and the Teaching Management Group monitors the general level of learning resources available to support the School's programmes. The School Board considers the longer term strategic development of learning resources for the School, including teaching space, library and IT provision.

213 At the end of each unit offered by the School, students are invited to complete a standard questionnaire. This is submitted to the School Office which processes the results. Information from the analysis is passed to unit organisers, who may modify their units in the light of the information. While a subcommittee of the Teaching Management Group receives the analysis of the questionnaires there was little evidence that it undertook a systematic review of the analysis which would enable it to identify generic matters across a range of units. Such a systematic review across the School's units might offer scope for further enhancement.

214 Students are represented on the School Board and the Teaching Management Group. There was, however, little evidence from the papers of these bodies that students contributed extensively to their discussions. Students who met the audit team had little knowledge of the representation arrangements within the School or across the University. Students told the team that they considered staff in the School to be approachable and believed that they knew who to approach if there were matters or questions they wished to raise.

215 The evidence available to the audit team from papers provided by the School, including the DSED, the School's intranet site, and from meetings with staff and students, demonstrate that the quality of learning opportunities provided by the School is suitable for programmes of study leading to the awards listed in paragraph 200 above.

Section 4: The audit investigations: published information

The students' experience of published information and other information available to them

216 The SED did not describe how the University manages the quality of its published information but noted that the University was aware that there was potential for handbooks provided by the schools to offer students information in ways that differed. The SED stated that a working group convened by the Academic Registrar had reviewed the provision of information to students and emphasised that it was anxious 'to ensure that information provided to students is accurate, timely, relevant, easily accessible and provided in an effective and efficient manner'. It added that 'in the light of...HEFCE 02/15' the University was 'revisiting and re-examining the ways in which students receive information'. The SWS described information on programmes of study and units as 'good' but stated that the quality of information provided to students across the University was inconsistent. The audit team welcomes the University's decision to review all matters to do with the information it provides to its students and, as users of its information, urges it to ensure the full involvement of students in this review.

217 In the course of the audit, the University made available prospectuses, course and student handbooks, the Course Catalogue, the CCS Regulations and its Calendar among many other documents. The audit team also had access to information available on the University and school intranets. In the course of the visits, the team was able to discuss with students, at all levels, their experience of the information provided by the University. The SWS drew attention to the number of students experiencing some form of change in their course of study after accepting their place at the University. The team was able to find clear statements of the University's complaints and appeal procedures on its intranet and followed up this matter in the DATs. In these cases, students had not experienced the difficulties described in the SWS, and considered that they were not disadvantaged by the variety of ways in which schools provided the information they needed. Students who met the team were satisfied with the information which their handbooks provided on assessment patterns and regulations and on academic appeals and complaints procedures.

218 In general, it appeared to the audit team that the information made available to students through student handbooks, University and school intranets and course documentation was satisfactory, notwithstanding variations in the level of detail and coverage from school to school.

Reliability, accuracy and completeness of published information

219 The SED indicated that the University was aware of the need to undertake work to ensure that it is able to meet its obligations under *HEFCE 02/15*, now finalised in *HEFCE 03/51*: *Information on quality and standards in higher education: Final guidance*. The SED provided some information on how the University proposed to carry this through, but the University has yet to establish means to collect feedback from its students across the institution on their learning experiences. From discussions with members of the University in the course of the visit the audit team learned that LTQC intends to undertake a review of the University's current approaches to obtaining student views on central services and, from the 2003-04 session, it intends to bring together the outcomes of the various student surveys carried out within the University. The final guidance on teaching quality information (TQI) provided in *HEFCE 03/51* requires institutions to provide annual summaries of the findings of external examiners on programmes and/or subjects. At the time of the audit, the University had yet to adopt a standard form or template for external examiner reports. It had, however, begun to pilot a standard form or report template for the use of external examiners in one school but this work had yet to be evaluated. In 2003, and for the first time, an overview of external examiners' reports was produced by LTQC for Senate. The University recognises that further work will be required before this latter report meets the specifications of *HEFCE 02/15* and *03/51*.

Findings

Findings

220 An institutional audit of the University of East Anglia was undertaken during the week commencing 19 January 2004. The purpose of the audit was to provide public information on the quality of the University's programmes of study and on the discharge of its responsibility as a UK degree-awarding body. As part of the audit process, according to protocols agreed with HEFCE, SCOP and UUK, five audit trails were selected for scrutiny at the level of an academic discipline. This section of the report of the audit summarises its findings. It concludes by identifying features of good practice that emerged from the audit, and recommendations to the University for enhancing current practice.

The effectiveness of institutional procedures for assuring the quality of programmes

221 Within the University LTQC is responsible to Senate for the quality of UEA's provision and the academic standards of its awards. The University's teaching and learning is chiefly delivered through its 18 schools, which are organised into three Groups. Within schools, the school boards are formally responsible for managing the quality of the learning and teaching they provide, and the quality management and academic standards work of the schools is increasingly monitored and coordinated by the LTQEs each Group has established. Senior members of the University consider that the Groups and their LTQEs provide a 'spine' connecting the schools and the LTQC. The ability of schools to bypass Group LTQEs and refer directly to LTQC has, however, limited the potential benefits of the establishment of the LTQEs to act as a filter and reduce the number of items on the agendas of LTQC meetings.

222 From the University's intranet the audit team learnt that the University plans to introduce four faculties from 1 August 2004. The University provided no information on how it proposes to modify its quality management or academic standards arrangements to ensure that they take account of the establishment of the faculties. The team is therefore unable to come to a conclusive view on how the introduction of faculties is likely to affect the University's quality management and academic standards arrangements.

223 The University's procedures for programme approval, monitoring and review are set out in its CPATQ. Those proposing new programmes of study are required to set out their proposal on a standard form and secure the support of the board of the relevant school, or schools. In addition, for proposals

requiring additional library or other learning resources the proposers are expected to seek the advice of the relevant service providers and may need to refer the proposal to the University's Planning and Resources Committee. Proposers are then expected to send their completed standard form for approval in principle to LTQC, which delegates responsibility for subsequent scrutiny to Group LTQEs. The latter have the authority to confer approval on a proposal which is then notified to LTQC. There is no requirement in the University's current procedures for external peers to be involved in the scrutiny or approval of new programme proposals, although in the case of those programmes associated with a PSRB it is expected that this will be the case. As a matter of priority, the University is advised to ensure the participation of fully independent external persons in the scrutiny and approval of proposals for new programmes of study.

224 The University has recently promulgated a New Methodology for the regular review of units and courses. The New Methodology for annual monitoring of units does not require a comprehensive review against a standard template, but invites unit organisers to identify particular aspects of the delivery of each unit for review each year, subject to the approval of the teaching committee of the relevant school. This seemed to the audit team to be a design weakness, in that the University would not be able to draw on the findings of annual monitoring of units, across the institution, to identify common matters of interest and trends. The team advises the University to introduce more robustly designed arrangements for the annual monitoring of units.

225 The annual monitoring of units is intended to support a regular process of course updates, one purpose of which is to ensure the accuracy of the relevant programme specifications. Only limited examples of the outcomes of this new process were available at the time of the audit. In one such instance, however, the relevant school appeared to have conducted the annual review of its units with exemplary thoroughness.

226 The University has recently enhanced its quinquennial course review process, which is based on documentation prepared by the course director, a course review event conducted by a panel, and a report to the Group LTQE. The New Methodology requires the participation of an external peer in the work of the course review panel, but that person may be an existing external examiner, or an examiner who has recently completed their appointment. The panel conducting the review may also include not only the course director but several other representatives from

the course under review. The inclusion in its membership of an external examiner and so many internal participants is likely to inhibit the capacity of the panel to take an independent and robust view of the provision under consideration. As a consequence, the audit team advises the University, as a matter of priority, to ensure the participation of fully independent external peers in the periodic review of its educational provision.

227 Until recently, the University has lacked systematic arrangements to gather and analyse feedback from its students, across the institution, on their experiences and it would now be advisable to establish means to do this. In this connection, it is of note that LTQC has decided that from 2003-04 it will consider the outcomes of all University-level surveys of students' views: this is an encouraging development. At programme level, the University gathers the views of its students on their learning experiences through questionnaires which they are expected to complete for each unit of study they undertake. The SWS suggested that systems for collecting and acting upon student feedback at school level varied in their effectiveness although, in some schools, information - including information from student feedback - was carefully used to inform internal reviews of provision and, in such cases, constituted a feature of good practice. Information from students who met the audit team in the course of the DATs indicated that the comprehensiveness and thoroughness with which feedback information was collected, and used to enhance units and programmes of study, varied from school to school. For centrally provided services, there are annual surveys of students' satisfaction with the support provided by, for example, the Library and the ITCS. In the case of the Library and other central services these appeared to be used systematically to enhance learning support, although this appears to have been less effective in the case of ITCS.

228 Under the University's former quinquennial course review method the views of graduates were sought on their experiences and the New Methodology requires the participation of students in quinquennial course reviews. The audit team saw evidence that the University's partner institutions regularly seek feedback from students studying for the University's awards for their internal quality management arrangements. It was not clear, however, what use the University made of such information. Overall, the team came to the view that the University's arrangements at the unit and course level for gathering feedback from its students were adequate but found little evidence that such feedback was analysed or put to use.

229 UEA has developed collaborative arrangements with three local further education colleges and other HEIs across East Anglia, and with a theatre arts college in London. These partnerships were described in the SED, and the audit team was able to confirm that LTQC carefully monitored such arrangements on behalf of the University through the Validation Office (part of the LTQO); the joint boards of study, which bring together University subject experts acting as advisers and members of programme teams in partner institutions; together with the external examiners' reports it receives directly. The inclusion of a collaborative programme offered with a local further education college in one of the DATs provided the team with clear evidence that these arrangements are capable of working successfully to monitor the quality of provision leading to its awards on behalf of the University, and to safeguard the academic standards of its awards. The team came to the view that the sound arrangements which underpin the University's relations with its local partner institutions constitute a feature of good practice.

230 In the case of Suffolk College, the University has established a Joint Academic Committee to exercise authority on its behalf to validate and approve new programme proposals and to monitor and review existing provision. The Joint Academic Committee is chaired by the University's DOCCP and reports to LTQC. The appointments of external examiners for programmes based at Suffolk College are approved by the University; their reports are sent to the University, as well as to the College, and are considered together with responses from the College at LTQC. The College also operates several programmes of study franchised by the University. The University's Handbook sets out its arrangements for managing the quality of its collaborative provision and for safeguarding the academic standards of the associated awards. Its provisions are consistent with the *Code of practice, Section 2: Collaborative provision*. There is clear evidence that the University's locally-based partners have taken care to satisfy themselves that their quality management arrangements are consistent not only with Section 2 of the *Code of practice* but with other relevant sections.

231 Many of the University's programmes make provision for students to undertake part of their studies through a placement abroad. Students who met the audit team were enthusiastic about the opportunities such placements provided and, in one case, the team found the relevant school was providing highly relevant and up-to-date information to those about to undertake a period of study abroad. This is a feature of good practice.

232 In 1998, the University participated in an overseas audit of a partnership with a college in Israel which has since lapsed. The University has established formal agreements with a number of HEIs overseas in support of the delivery of year abroad studies for continuing UEA students in North America and Australasia, and others (for example, in Addis Ababa and Hong Kong) to support programmes of studies leading to research awards delivered by University teaching staff abroad. It is the University's view that quality management arrangements for placement learning delivered abroad through a partnership arrangement should be equivalent to those for programmes delivered on campus; this does not, however, take account of the special challenges (and risks) associated with the delivery and support of University programmes, at all levels, abroad. The University might therefore wish to consider reviewing and enhancing, where required, its academic standards and quality management arrangements for distance and distributed learning, especially for those of its students whose learning is delivered by such means overseas.

233 The SED stated that the University's confidence in the soundness of its 'standards and quality' derived from the comments of its external examiners in their reports, the recognition of its awards by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, and the outcomes of the Agency's subject reviews. The SED also identified the University's confidence in the staff who support its quality management, including members of the LTQD, the LTQO, the Academic Division and the LTQEs, and UEA's internal Codes of Practice and regulations. Reviewing the University's arrangements for quality management the audit team observed that there were several gaps in coverage between the University's Codes of Practice and the *Code of practice*, published by the Agency, for example, in placement learning, the assessment of students and some aspects of overseas partnership arrangements. There are also gaps in some aspects of the University's arrangements for approving new programmes of study and monitoring and reviewing existing provision, particularly with respect to the participation of external peers. The Group LTQEs have been in operation for a comparatively short period but have already begun to provide a valuable means of monitoring the work of the schools and contributing to the quality management of their provision, while keeping LTQC informed of developments. As the University takes forward its plans for faculties, it will wish to consider carrying forward and further developing the good work of the Groups and their LTQEs and, more widely, the quality management and academic standards arrangements that will be needed in its new internal structures.

The effectiveness of institutional procedures for securing the standards of awards

234 The SED identified the University's external examiners and their reports, and the reports of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and external agencies such as Ofsted and the Agency as key elements of its approach to 'standards and quality'. It provided no further information on how it secured the academic standards of its awards and did not offer any guidance on whether the University used statistical data such as progression and completion statistics for monitoring purposes, or on its overall management of its assessment processes. The text of a presentation on the University's proposals for restructuring available to staff on its intranet stated that, under present arrangements, the University's 'Decentralised processes are diverse, difficult to audit, inconsistent and vulnerable to error' and that 'Management information is hard to come by and often unexploited'. This was confirmed in the SED, where the University expressed its intention to develop its systems further. The audit team was heartened to find this evidence of critical self-awareness. It was also encouraged to find the University had identified for itself that its present arrangements to analyse and make use of data on its activities (in this particular case, with respect to progression and completion information to inform work on academic standards) are underdeveloped. The team advises the University, as a matter of priority, to review the data routinely collected by and from schools, with a view to ensuring that information can be reliably and consistently generated from this data to inform University-level understanding and management of the well-being of its educational provision and the security of its academic awards.

235 The audit team reviewed reports from a number of external examiners through the DATs, and considered the findings of a recent Academic Review by the Agency of the University's computing provision. Together these indicated some difficulty on the part of external peers in establishing the nature and extent of double-marking and moderation of examination scripts for assessments that contribute to awards, which is a University requirement.

236 The University's management of its external examiner arrangements is governed by its Code of Practice for the External Examiner System for Awards (taught programmes) at UEA (COPEES). External examiners are nominated by individual schools and their appointment is subject to approval by the Director of Undergraduate Studies or his counterpart for Graduate Studies. External examiners are provided with guidance on how to structure their reports

which is consistent with the precepts of the *Code of practice, Section 4: External examining*. At the time of the audit the University was undertaking a pilot exercise to assess the potential of providing external examiners with a standard form to use in compiling their reports. External examiners are directed to send their reports to the PVC (LTQ); copies of their reports are sent by the LTQO to each school. Group LTQEs are responsible for monitoring the responses made by schools to external examiners.

237 The University is confident that its arrangements for dealing with and responding to the reports of external examiners are robust, and that the latter have consistently confirmed the academic standards of UEA's awards. External examiners' reports seen by the audit team confirmed that external examiners were satisfied with the appropriateness of the academic standards of the awards for which they had responsibilities and that schools acted on their recommendations. The team was able to confirm that the University's academic standards arrangements in its locally based collaborative provision are sound, but that further work was required with respect to quality management arrangements for programmes delivered by University staff overseas.

238 In some areas, the evidence to confirm the University's views of the effectiveness of its quality management and academic standards arrangements is not conclusive, however, particularly with respect to the participation of external peers in approving new programmes of study, and in reviewing existing programmes through quinquennial course review, together with some procedural weaknesses in the latter arrangements. In the case of the University's assessment arrangements it would now be advisable for the University to clarify the advice it offers to its schools on the purpose and conduct of double-marking and/or moderation, and to satisfy itself that in all cases, double-marking and or moderation is being carried out by its schools in line with its requirements. Attention to these measures will place on a more secure footing the University's confidence in the soundness of its arrangements to manage the quality of its provision and safeguard the academic standards of its awards.

The effectiveness of institutional procedures for supporting learning

239 The University's Library, ITCS and Audio Visual Services are managed by its Information Services Directorate. Liaison and advice arrangements between the schools and the Library and the Careers Service respectively seemed to the audit team to be working effectively and to be features of good

practice. Liaison arrangements between other central services and the schools also appeared to be good, although those between ITCS and the schools appeared to the team to be less effective. In most cases, the evidence available to the team showed that the University's Central Services were working purposefully to identify and meet the needs of users. At the time of the audit schools were beginning to make use of the VLE software acquired by the University to support teaching and learning on campus and further afield.

240 Students' needs for advice and support are met in the schools through the University's adviser system which provides each student with access to designated members of the teaching staff. There are also centrally provided learning support arrangements operating under the auspices of the ODS which include arrangements for English language support for overseas students. Most students who met the audit team were strong supporters of the University's adviser arrangements and considered them to be working effectively. Arrangements for the supervision of research students and taught postgraduate students completing dissertations also appeared, in general terms, to be working well. Some taught postgraduate students indicated that there were difficulties in contacting dissertation supervisors outside the times when undergraduate students were being taught, and some research postgraduate students described difficulties in contacting their primary supervisor (the leader of their supervisory team) in some circumstances. Overall, however, the team came to the view that supervision arrangements for research postgraduates were working well, and corresponded to the terms of the University's Code of Practice on Assuring the Quality of Research Degrees.

241 The University has recently reviewed adviser arrangements across the schools. It has found significant variations in the ways in which the latter had interpreted UEA's requirements and, therefore, in the way in which the adviser system operated from school to school. Staff and students who met the audit team strongly supported the purpose and concept of the adviser system; the team found, however, that the number of students each adviser was required to support varied widely between schools and, in some cases, the onus was on the student to seek out and meet their adviser.

242 Additional pastoral support for students is available through ODS which manages counselling, health, welfare, financial hardship services and support for international students. The audit team noted that the SWS had indicated high levels of student satisfaction with the centrally provided

support services. Students who met the team were equally supportive of the central services, although it seemed to the team to be anomalous that the University's arrangements require that the Dean of Students should also exercise a disciplinary role.

243 CPATQ states that arrangements for staff appointment, development, promotion and appraisal constitute one of the key elements of the University's approach to managing the quality of its provision and securing the academic standards of its awards. The University's Human Resources strategy is supported by policies and procedures for the recruitment, induction, appraisal and reward of staff. In the recruitment of staff, the SED noted that the University had recently adopted a policy of appointing all new lecturers at grade B in order to 'improve the quality of applicants'. Members of staff who met the audit team included several who had been newly appointed. Staff were able to confirm that the University's recruitment and induction procedures are operated in line with its stated procedures. Probationers and the mentors who supported them described their experiences of the University's mentoring scheme to the team which came to the view that it represented a feature of good practice.

244 The University operates a single Staff Appraisal and Development Scheme for all its staff. Newly appointed staff are appraised annually while those of greater seniority can opt for biennial appraisal. Staff support and development across the University is supported by the CSED which provides a mandatory postgraduate Programme in Higher Education Practice for probationers, and training for newly designated supervisors of research students. Training programmes are also in place for administrative and clerical staff, provided through the Academic Division, and in teaching skills for part-time teaching staff and for postgraduate teaching assistants; the latter constitutes one feature of good practice among many in the work of CSED.

245 Overall, the University considers that its learning support arrangements with respect to its centrally provided learning services are sound, a view with which the audit team broadly agrees. The University is aware that work remains to be done on its adviser arrangements; the team concurs and encourages the University to continue with its efforts to ensure that its adviser arrangements meet the needs of its students. The University is confident that its supervision arrangements for research students are working well. The evidence available to the team supports this view. The University is also confident that its staff recruitment, induction, appraisal and staff development arrangements are meeting its needs. Again, the evidence available to the team

indicates many areas of strength and confirms the grounds for the University's confidence that its recruitment, induction, appraisal and staff development procedures are working effectively.

Outcomes of discipline audit trails

Biological sciences

246 The DAT comprised programmes of study offered in the School of Biological Sciences (the School) and at Otley College leading to the following awards of the University: BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences; BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences (part-time); BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences (with a year in Europe): four-year degree; BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences (with a year in North America): four-year degree; BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences (with a year in Australasia): four-year degree; BSc (Hons) Biochemistry; BSc (Hons) Biochemistry (part-time); BSc (Hons) Biochemistry (with a year in Europe): four-year degree; BSc (Hons) Biochemistry (with a year in North America): four-year degree; BSc (Hons) Biochemistry (with a year in Australasia): four-year degree; BSc (Hons) Biochemistry and Molecular Biology; MSc Applied Ecology and Conservation; MSc Applied Ecology and Conservation (part-time); together with the BSc (Hons) Conservation Management delivered by Otley College.

247 The DAT was supported by specially written DSEDs for the UEA and Otley College provision and a recent revalidation submission for the Otley programmes, together with programme specifications which conformed to the format adopted by UEA. Otley College staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the academic levels, progression and attainment of their programmes in relation to the *FHEQ*. From its study of students' assessed work, and from discussions with students and staff, the audit team formed the view that the standard of student achievement in the programmes was appropriate to the title of the respective awards and their location within the *FHEQ*.

248 For all programmes included in the DAT, external examiners' reports have consistently approved the appropriateness of the assessment procedures, and the academic standards attained by students. The assessment methods adopted for individual units of study are checked by the relevant board of study when the unit is approved. The School's USC has recently surveyed coursework loads across the School's programmes and is seeking to achieve greater parity in what is asked of students. There are also concerns where students study in two schools and experience different regulations, for example, with respect to penalties for late submission

of coursework. The evidence available to the team indicated that the School was actively seeking to manage the assessment processes it operates.

249 The audit team was able to confirm, in each instance, that learning opportunities were suitable for the programmes of study leading to the awards included in the scope of the DAT. In the case of the BSc (Hons) Conservation Management at Otley College, however, continuing vigilance will be required from the College and the University to ensure that staffing and resource levels for the programmes continue to be appropriate. Students who met the team were satisfied with the learning resource provision available to them.

250 Students' evaluations of their learning experiences are collected by the School and by Otley College. The evidence available to the audit team indicated that the School and the College, respectively, paid careful attention to students' views. Students confirmed to the team that their feedback information was used, and that they were able to contribute to the quality management of their programmes through the Staff-Student Liaison Group and their membership of other School committees. The team concluded that the quality of learning opportunities available to students was suitable for the programmes of study leading to the awards included in the scope of the DAT.

Mathematics

251 The DAT comprised programmes of study offered in the School of Mathematics (the School) leading to the following awards: BSc (Hons) Mathematics (full-time); BSc (Hons) Mathematics (part-time); BSc (Hons) Pure Mathematics; BSc (Hons) Applied Mathematics; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with a year in Europe; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Economics; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Management Studies; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Statistics; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Environmental Science; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Meteorology; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Music; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Philosophy; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with French Language; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with German Language; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Spanish Language; BSc (Hons) Mathematics with Computing; BSc Joint (Hons) Computing and Mathematics; MMath Mathematics; MMath Mathematics with a year in North America; MMath Mathematics with a year in Europe; MMath Biomathematics; Ordinary Degree in Mathematics; Graduate Diploma in Mathematics; MSc Pure Mathematics; MSc Modelling in Applied Mathematics; MSc by Research; MPhil; and PhD.

252 The DSED provided to support the DAT was specially written and programme specifications for all programmes included within the scope of the DAT were appended to it. The programme specifications are consistent with the format for such documents adopted by UEA. From its study of students' assessed work, and from discussions with students and staff, the audit team formed the view that the standard of student achievement in the programmes in the scope of the DAT was appropriate to the title of the relevant awards. It was less clear, however, that the mathematics programmes were consistent with the expectations of the *FHEQ* in demonstrating progression from level 2 to level 3, since level 2 units can be taken in the final year of study. The evidence available from the School's papers including reports from external examiners and the school's responses to them, suggested that project work was subject to blind, double-marking. Evidence that the School routinely double-marked or moderated examination scripts was less clear. Students were able to confirm the team's view that marked coursework was usually returned to students with generally helpful comments and advice.

253 Students have opportunities to provide the School with feedback on their learning experiences in real time through an innovative 'Open Forum' using IT facilities provided by the Learning Resource Centre. Students were also able to confirm that they were generally satisfied with their representation on the School's internal committees and that the School gave consideration to their views. The School's programmes include several which provide for opportunities to study abroad for a year. Students who had experienced these opportunities complimented the School on the care it devoted to preparing them for study abroad, for example, through the provision of handbooks updated with the assistance of current students abroad. These arrangements seemed to the team to constitute a feature of good practice. The team concluded that the quality of learning opportunities available to students was suitable for programmes of study leading to the awards included in the scope of the DAT.

Music

254 The DAT comprised programmes of study offered in the School of Music (the School), leading to the following awards: BA (Hons) Music; BA (Hons) Music with Mathematics; BA (Hons) Music with Computing; BA (Hons) Music Performance Studies; MMus by Research; MMus Performance Studies; MPhil; and PhD.

255 The DAT was supported by a specially written DSED to which programme specifications for the undergraduate and taught postgraduate awards

were appended. The programme specifications make appropriate reference to the *Subject benchmark statement* for music, and the prerequisites specified in the programmes ensure that the programmes of study align satisfactorily with the advice offered by the *FHEQ*.

256 From its study of students' assessed work and from discussions with students and staff, the audit team was able to confirm that the School collected and analysed progression and completion data in seeking to monitor the impact of changes in assessment arrangements. The School's use of progression and completion data to monitor its quality management appeared to the team to constitute a feature of good practice. The team formed the view that the standard of student achievement in the programmes was appropriate to the titles of the awards and to their location within the *FHEQ*.

257 The small size of the School facilitates good informal academic contacts between students and staff. Students who met the audit team were satisfied that they had adequate informal opportunities to provide feedback and evaluation to the School but this informality has constrained the development of the School's SSLC. It would now be helpful for the University to work with the School to review the balance to be struck between informal and formal methods in gathering and analysing feedback information from music students. Overall, the team concluded that the quality of learning opportunities available to students was suitable for programmes of study leading to the awards within the scope of the DAT.

Literature

258 The DAT comprised programmes of study offered by the Literature with Creative Writing Sector (the Sector) of the School of English and American Studies (the School), leading to the following awards: BA (Hons) English Literature; BA (Hons) English Literature (part-time); BA (Hons) English Literature with Creative Writing; BA (Hons) English Studies; MPhil; PhD in English Literature; and Creative and Critical Writing.

259 The DAT was supported by a DSED specially written by the Sector for the audit, to which were appended programme specifications for the programmes within the scope of the DAT. These appeared to the audit team to be broadly consistent with the *Subject benchmark statement* for English, although they did not align with the guidance offered by the *FHEQ* in that progression from level-to-level was not clearly demonstrated since students are only required to study a minimum of two units at level 2 in their final year of study.

260 The assessment procedures operated by the School and the Sector are generally in line with the University's expectations, other than in the area of double-marking and moderation of examination scripts, where external examiners have made known their concerns. Members of staff told the audit team they were endeavouring to meet the University's requirements for double-marking.

261 The School collects completion and progression data for each unit. These had informed a recently conducted quinquennial course review and, in the context of the University, appeared to the audit team to have been done well. Progression and completion data for the programmes within the scope of the DAT were appended to the DSED but there was no discussion or analysis of the data in the document. Students who met the team said that the School's procedures for granting extensions to deadlines for the submission of coursework and applying penalties for late coursework sometimes seemed to be at variance with published policies. The team formed the view that the standard of student achievement in the programmes was appropriate to the titles of the awards and to their location within the *FHEQ*.

262 Students following programmes supported by the Sector have opportunities to provide feedback on their learning experiences through questionnaires completed for each unit studied. Students who met the audit team were satisfied that the Sector took their views into consideration in managing the quality of its provision. The School and the Sector have established good working relationships with the Library and other central services and make good use of the University's email services to provide feedback and information to students. The Sector is also beginning to work with the University's recently acquired VLE. The team concluded that the quality of learning opportunities available to students is suitable for the programmes of study which lead to the awards within the scope of the DAT.

Business and management

263 The DAT comprised programmes of study offered by the School of Business and Management (the School) leading to the following awards: BSc (Hons) Business Management; BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance; BSc (Hons) Accounting with Law; BSc (Hons) Accounting with Management; MSc Business Management; MSc Marketing; MSc E-Business; MBA (part-time); MPhil; and PhD in Management.

264 The DAT was supported by a specially written DSED to which were appended programme specifications within the scope of the DAT (above). The programme specifications followed the format

approved by the University and it was clear that the relevant benchmark statements had been referred to in compiling them. The programme specifications named the specific professional bodies associated with particular programmes of study, although they do not articulate the specific requirements of each in relation to exemption and/or recognition. The extensive use of prerequisites in the School's programmes ensure that progression can be demonstrated and that the programmes are appropriate to the titles of the awards and to their location within the *FHEQ*.

265 Evidence from the School's internal papers, including correspondence with external examiners, demonstrated its concern to ensure that the programmes and awards remain consistent with the requirements and expectations of the relevant professional bodies. The School's assessment arrangements allow for only a sample of 20 per cent of examination scripts to be subject to the scrutiny of a second marker, and it was difficult for the audit team to be confident from the sample of marked student work that it saw that double-marking was being conducted. In some cases, where units are not assessed by examinations alone, the team found that it might take several months for a piece of work submitted for assessment to be returned with feedback and comments. The School provided progression completion and first-destination data with the DSED which did not, however, discuss or comment on the data. The School is confident in its ability to provide the data required by the Group LTQE for monitoring purposes.

266 Students who met the audit team were generally satisfied with the learning opportunities available to them; research postgraduate students were appreciative of the additional learning resources provided for them through the Library. The School operates an adviser system in line with the University's recommendations, and students are also able to refer queries to course directors. Students are asked to provide feedback on their learning experiences in the course of each unit using standard questionnaires, the data from which are processed and analysed by the School Office. There was little evidence in the School's papers that its Teaching Management Group made use of these analyses to identify generic strengths and any areas requiring attention. The School provides for student representation on its Board and its Teaching Management Group. Students who met the team had little knowledge of the representation arrangements within the School or, more generally, across the University. They were confident, however, in the approachability of staff and that should they need assistance it would be provided. The School will

wish to give further consideration to ensuring that formal representation arrangements for students are effective. The team concluded that the quality of learning opportunities available to students was broadly suitable for the programmes of study leading to the awards within the scope of the DAT.

The use made by the institution of the academic infrastructure

267 The University's New Methodology and its own Codes of Practice refer those using them to the individual elements of the academic infrastructure on the Agency's web site. For example, the University's standard template for producing programme specifications indicates the need to refer to subject benchmark statements and the *FHEQ*. The SED did not, however, provide clear guidance on the University's approach to the academic infrastructure overall.

268 Consideration of the University's papers and discussions with members of staff led the audit team to the view that UEA had yet to develop a consistent and thoroughgoing approach to assessing its existing arrangements against the advice offered in the academic infrastructure. For example, the University appeared to lack systematic arrangements for receiving and considering sections of the *Code of practice* as they had been published, nor did it appear to have conducted a systematic mapping of its own Codes of Practice against the sections of the *Code*. This might explain why key elements of the New Methodology, including quinquennial course review, do not yet align satisfactorily with the relevant sections of the *Code*. Similar comments might be also be made about the University's arrangements for approving new programme proposals, and for the management of its assessment processes. The University will wish to consider the advisability of developing and publishing for all staff systematic arrangements for receiving and considering sections of the *Code* and any subsequent amendments to it.

269 It appeared to the audit team that staff in the Schools had referred to the relevant subject benchmark statements when compiling programme specifications, but information from the DATs indicated that the manner in which the concept of 'level' is used in the University's current CCS Degree Regulations does not sit easily with the advice offered in the *FHEQ* in that, under present arrangements, it appears possible for a student to secure an honours award having studied half (or possibly less than half) of the units in their final year of study at level 3. This is a matter which the University might wish to consider further, in the

course of its forthcoming review of its assessment arrangements, in order to ensure that its use of levels in the assessment of undergraduate work gives its students sufficient scope to demonstrate progression in their attainments.

270 Overall, it appeared to the audit team that the University had responded appropriately to subject benchmark statements and programme specifications, but that further work would now be advisable to review the University's use of 'levels' in its assessment arrangements for undergraduate programmes to ensure that bring them into closer alignment with the guidance offered in the *FHEQ*, and that it would also be advisable to bring the University's arrangements for the approval of new programmes and the periodic review of its existing programmes into closer alignment with the relevant precepts of the *Code of practice.*

The utility of the SED as an illustration of the University's capacity to reflect upon its own strengths and limitations, and to act on these to enhance quality and standards

271 The SED provided by the University to support the audit had been carefully written but the structure adopted did not follow that advised in the *Handbook for institutional audit: England* and there were some omissions. Consequently it did not provide the audit team with clear information on UEA's approach to a number of matters, including its plans for the introduction of faculties and how it safeguards the academic standards of its awards.

272 Overall, the audit team found that the SED provided less insight into the University's ability to reflect upon its own strengths and limitations, and to act on these reflections to enhance quality and standards than several of the papers the team found on the University's intranet which had been prepared at the highest level. The latter indicated the critical acuity parts of the University are able to bring to the analysis of its circumstances and future development.

Commentary on the institution's intentions for the enhancement of quality and standards

273 The SED identified a considerable number of areas where the University planned to enhance its quality management and academic standards arrangements through improving existing procedures. Through its discussions with members of the University and consideration of internal papers, including meetings and papers provided through the DATs, the audit team came to the view that the SED had underplayed the volume and nature of UEA's

considerable commitment to the enhancement of its provision and internal arrangements. Under the University's present quality management arrangements many of these enhancement activities take place within its schools, and it may be difficult to gather information about them and disseminate it across the institution. The University may wish to consider the desirability of inviting schools, through the Groups (or their successors), to provide information periodically on school and Group-level enhancement activities and their progress.

Reliability of information

274 The SED reported the University's awareness that work needed to be done to enable it to meet its obligations under *HEFCE 03/51*. In the course of the visit members of the University told the audit team that LTQC was leading work on reviewing the University's current approaches to obtaining student views on central services and, from the 2003-04 session, it intended to bring together the outcomes of all the various student surveys carried out across the University. With respect to summaries of external examiners' reports, the University was beginning to pilot and evaluate the use of a standard form for external examiner reports. As the University itself has recognised, the collection and analysis of management information including, for example, progression and completion statistics across the institution, remains a challenge that it will have to tackle. Although the team is satisfied that the University has begun to engage with the HEFCE recommendations for the production of TQI, a substantial range of matters remains to be resolved before the University will be in a position to provide TQI to the national web site.

Features of good practice

275 In the course of the audit the following features of good practice were identified or brought to the attention of the audit team:

i.   the sound arrangements underpinning the University's relations with local partner institutions (paragraph 135);

ii.   its mentoring arrangements for newly-appointed teaching staff (paragraph 92); its provision of research training for postgraduate research students (paragraph 99) and the opportunities the latter are given to undertake undergraduate teaching after suitable training (paragraph 100); and many instances of the work of the CSED (paragraph 97);

iii.   the liaison arrangements between its schools, the Library, and the Careers Service (paragraphs 111 and 126);

iv. the procedure introduced in one school of returning coursework to students through the adviser system in order to encourage discussions about students' progress (paragraph 119); and the thoroughness with which units are reviewed in some areas (paragraph 145);

v. the advance information provided to students studying for a year abroad by the School of Mathematics (paragraph 170);

vi. the engagement of some schools with the University's widening participation agenda, and the use made by some schools of statistics to inform their internal reviews of their provision (paragraph 177);

vii. the creative ways in which some schools use the University's intranet, email arrangements and virtual learning environments to support teaching and learning (paragraph 198); and the way in which some areas draw on student feedback to enhance the curriculum (paragraph 76).

Recommendations for action

276 The audit team advises the University to:

i. review as a matter of priority whether its present use of levels in its assessment arrangements for undergraduates allows sufficient scope for its students to demonstrate progression in their attainments (paragraph 36); ensure the participation of fully independent external persons in the initial approval and internal periodic review of its educational provision (paragraph 56);

ii. review as a matter of priority and enhance, where necessary, its academic standards and quality management arrangements for distance and distributed learning, especially for those of its students whose learning is delivered by such means overseas (paragraphs 41 and 107).

iii. clarify its requirements of schools with respect to the purpose and conduct of double-marking and/or moderation, and satisfying itself that in all cases, double-marking and/or moderation are being carried out by its schools in line with its requirements (paragraph 38); introduce marking systems that mask the identity of the candidate from markers and/or examiners, as suggested in the *Code of practice* (paragraph 38); introduce more robust arrangements for the annual review of provision (paragraph 52); develope arrangements to ensure and confirm that commitments given on behalf of the University by schools to external examiners (or to the University itself) are met in a timely fashion (paragraph 61);

take forward with alacrity its intention to review at University level, the data routinely collected by and from schools, with a view to ensuring that information can be reliably and consistently generated from it to inform its understanding and management of the academic well-being of its provision, and the security of its academic awards (paragraph 88);

iv. put in place systematic arrangements for receiving and considering sections of the *Code of practice* (and any subsequent amendments to sections or precepts of the *Code*), and for confirming how sections of the University's own Code of Practice relate to the precepts of the *Code* and for making them known to staff (paragraph 63).

277 The University may also wish to consider the desirability of:

v. considering how best to ensure student participation in any new quality management arrangements for faculties (paragraph 77);

vi. developing means to gather and analyse feedback from its students, University-wide, on their experiences (paragraph 84);

vii. reviewing its arrangements, independent of ITCS, for establishing and monitoring the extent to which ITCS is meeting the needs of staff and students (paragraph 114).

University of East Anglia

The University of East Anglia's response to the audit report

The University welcomes the judgement of 'broad confidence' in its management of the quality of academic programmes and the academic standards of its awards. It was pleased that the report of the institutional audit reflects some of the many strengths of its activities, including work with partner institutions.

The University noted that the report also identifies some of its own projects for enhancement, in particular:

- its plans to implement a recently approved process for course and unit review, and monitor the ongoing effectiveness of the process;

- its intention to conduct a substantial review of policies and procedures for the assessment of students.

Following the audit visit, the University's Senate and Council approved the introduction of four faculties. In the development of its new structures the University will look to draw upon the strengths of its existing arrangements, in particular the 'spine' of its structures for quality, running from University-level Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee and Directorate through to the Schools of Study.

The University endorses the view that it will necessarily revisit the role of the current Group Learning, Teaching and Quality Executives as it moves forward from the present group structure into the new faculty structure. Above all, however, it recognises the importance of maintaining clear and appropriate arrangements for the assurance of quality and standards, and for the provision of management information, throughout the new structures as these are developed.

Alongside these internal developments, the University will maintain its programme for the ongoing enhancement of quality assurance mechanisms, ensuring that they take due account of the precepts of the *Code of practice* [published by the Agency] and other authoritative reference points.

The University will consider the report further and develop an action plan to take forward recommendations.