



# Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of UCFB College of Football Business Ltd

June 2019

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## About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at UCFB College of Football Business Ltd. The review took place from 26 to 27 June 2019, and was conducted by a team of four reviewers, as follows:

- Ms Catherine Fairhurst
- Ms Elizabeth Shakels
- Mr Mike Ridout
- Mr Oliver Wannell (student reviewer).

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

In Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) the QAA review team:

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

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#)<sup>2</sup> and explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).<sup>3</sup> For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code).

<sup>2</sup> QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk).

<sup>3</sup> Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/higher-education-review](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/higher-education-review).

## Key findings

### Judgements

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

### Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following feature of **good practice**.

- Extensive employment and complementary curricula opportunities are available that enable students to develop their personal, academic and professional potential (Expectation B4).

### Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations**.

By January 2020:

- contextualise the operations manual in order to articulate UCFB's own approach to quality assurance and improvement (Expectation A2.1).

By October 2019:

- review the admissions policy to ensure that it is transparent, accurate and inclusive to all applicants (Expectation B2).

By October 2019:

- ensure that UCFB operates an Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning process that is equitable (Expectation B6).

By January 2020:

- embed a rigorous quality assurance cycle around its monitoring and review processes to ensure robust cross standardisation that promotes the quality of the student learning experience (Expectation B8).

By October 2019:

- review UCFB processes for the management of the quality of information about learning opportunities to ensure information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy (Expectation Part C).

By January 2020:

- develop and implement a more systematic approach to monitoring, measuring and reporting enhancement (Expectation Enhancement).

## **Financial sustainability, management and governance**

The financial sustainability, management and governance check has been satisfactorily completed.

## About the provider

UCFB College of Football Business Ltd (UCFB) is an approved College of Buckinghamshire New University (BNU). It was granted 'University Campus' title from the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2018.

UCFB's mission is 'To provide best in class graduates with football, sport and business expertise'. This mission is underpinned by UCFB's Vision, which is 'To be the world's leading provider of excellence for football business and the wider sports education'.

UCFB offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees with a suite of BA (Hons) and MSc programmes at the Etihad Campus in Manchester and Wembley Campus in London, supported academically by Buckinghamshire New University.

There are currently 2,079 students enrolled at UCFB, 864 are enrolled at the Etihad campus and 1,215 at the Wembley campus, with a further 26 enrolled on an MSc International Sports Management programme. Students are taught by a total of 67 staff, 13 of whom are part-time.

UCFB aims to provide each student with the opportunity to study a traditional academic subject, engage with inspirational role models and gain unique opportunities within the context of an industry for which they have a genuine passion and interest, while ensuring full transferability of education skills and experience. UCFB has nurtured relationships with football and sports industries with organisations such as the Premier League, Scottish Professional Football League, Football League, The Football Association, Umbro, BBC Sport, ITV Sport, and Sky Sports and aims to support the transition of a student to becoming an active, skilled member of the workforce and realising their aspirations.

UCFB was reviewed by QAA in June 2018 as part of the annual monitoring process. The review team concluded that UCFB was making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision since the previous monitoring visit in June 2017.

## Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Findings

1.1 The University Campus of Football Business Ltd (UCFB) delivers its higher education provision in partnership with Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) as the awarding body. In March 2018 the Department for Education (DfE) had no objection to the word 'university' in the provider name. BNU retains responsibility for the design, development and approval for all programmes and for ensuring academic standards are set through its own academic frameworks and regulations. UCFB Strategic Board, chaired by a BNU Pro-Vice Chancellor, is responsible for ensuring compliance and maintenance of academic standards and reports to the University Partnership Board. At UCFB the Academic Board, reporting to the Governing Body, is responsible for setting, maintaining and assuring academic standards of UCFB. BNU awards the qualifications of the undergraduate and master's-level programmes and assigns credit values to units.

1.2 The approach taken by UCFB with the oversight of BNU in respect to the maintaining of academic standards of awards allows the Expectation to be met.

1.3 The review team has tested this Expectation through scrutiny of approval and review documents from the awarding body, external examiner reports, and internal quality documents together with discussions with UCFB senior staff.

1.4 The awarding body's programme approval processes together with external examiner oversight fully secure the UK threshold standards and aligns the undergraduate and master's programmes to the FHEQ; this together with relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, is explicit in the programme specifications. The module descriptors in the programme handbooks also clearly display the FHEQ level of each module.

1.5 The awarding body's validation report confirms that the programme is appropriately aligned to the Quality Code, with specific reference to Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ. The external examiners appointed by BNU confirm that the standards set conform to the Subject Benchmark Statements and the FHEQ.

1.6 The external examiners agree that the assessments are carefully aligned to the learning outcomes and the decisions made at the progression board are fair and consistent. UCFB clearly communicates intended learning outcomes to students through programme documentation. Managers and teaching staff show a good understanding of the FHEQ and its implications for programme design, delivery and assessment. The University's Lead Supervisory Tutor ensures that all partner staff involved with the programmes have a thorough understanding of the UK higher education sector, FHEQ and the Quality Code. Details of this are recorded in the Visit Reports.

1.7 There are thorough and effective processes for UCFB to secure and maintain academic standards. The Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

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

**Findings**

1.8 In order to secure academic standards, UCFB refers to the Buckinghamshire New University and Partner Institutions Operations Manual. Ultimate responsibility for the setting and maintenance of the academic standards of the programmes offered by UCFB rests with BNU, its awarding body. BNU has detailed guidelines for programme development and approval that are aligned with the FHEQ, relevant subject and qualification benchmarks and inform programme specifications. The award of academic credit and qualifications is made in accordance with the overarching regulations and academic framework.

1.9 The Operations Manual outlines the purposes and principles that guide assessment across the higher education programme with detailed policies and procedures in the programme handbooks. These refer to the full approved University Academic Assessment Regulations and procedures. UCFB quality management cycle is detailed and published in the calendar and runs parallel to that of BNU.

1.10 The adherence of UCFB to BNU's comprehensive academic frameworks, regulations and processes, the subsequent oversight through approval and validating processes, and the comprehensive university supervisory tutor reports allow the Expectation to be met.

1.11 The review team scrutinised UCFB's processes and their effectiveness through consideration of evidence provided in documented quality assurance procedures, minutes of meetings, external examiner reports, and meetings with staff and students.

1.12 UCFB has developed formal arrangements for the oversight of the internal academic frameworks in parallel and to ensure compliance with awarding body regulations. These are not always specifically articulated or easy for students and staff to find. In accordance with the recent periodic partner review recommendation, the review team **recommends** that UCFB contextualises the operations manual in order to articulate UCFB's own approach to quality assurance and improvement.

1.13 There is an established committee structure with minutes demonstrating that the Academic Board has started to take responsibility for academic standards. The Board of Directors takes commercial decisions and the Governing Body, chaired by an external member, determines academic matters so that decisions on academic standards and quality of learning opportunities are not compromised by business imperatives.

1.14 Students have access to the BNU regulations through electronic hyper-links within the programme handbooks, and they are available on the University website. Teaching staff showed confidence about the maintenance of academic standards particularly due to recent staff development and the relationship with the University.

1.15 UCFB is responsible for setting, marking and internal moderation of assessment for all programmes except BSc (Hons) Sports Psychology for which all assessments are set by BNU. The moderation process outlines the required procedures for marking and standardisation, and the module descriptors clearly articulate the assessment requirements.

The Board of Examiners receives assessment results and confirms awards. BNU approves, appoints and trains external examiners based on nominations received from UCFB. The reports from the external examiners confirm that the awarding body is satisfied with UCFB's management and delivery of their award.

1.16 UCFB secures academic standards by applying the academic frameworks and regulations of those of its awarding body. The recommendation in this area relates to further establishing its own contextualisation but because of the current University oversight the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**Level of risk: Low**

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

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

**Findings**

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

1.18 UCFB follows the University's requirements and documentation to fulfil its responsibility in providing a definitive record of all programmes. This includes reference to the FHEQ, Subject Benchmark Statements, and, where appropriate, to professional, regulatory and statutory bodies' requirements together with information about programme aims, individual learning outcomes, structure and assessment. Amendments to programmes are undertaken by following the University's Course Amendment Procedure. UCFB's adherence to the University's requirements and documentation indicates that the Expectation is met.

1.19 The review team explored the maintenance and use of definitive records by analysing examples of programme specifications, programme handbooks, the UCFB website and virtual learning environment (VLE) and met academic and support staff.

1.20 Programme specifications follow the University format and are approved by the University's Academic Planning Committee. Programme specifications clearly set out information relating to level of qualification, Subject Benchmark Statements, mode of delivery, admission requirements, programme aims, outcomes, learning, teaching and assessment methods. The definitive records of all programmes reside with the University's Academic Quality Directorate and UCFB's quality team makes the current version of the definitive documents available through the Definitive Documents folder on the shared drive. College staff are notified when approved and/or amended definitive documents and module descriptors have been uploaded. Programme specifications are available to prospective students on UCFB's website, and current students confirmed their access to programme specification and module descriptors through the VLE and programme handbooks.

1.21 The review team considers that UCFB's adherence to the University's requirements and documentation ensures that comprehensive definitive records of programmes offered act as a reference point for delivery, assessment and provision of records of study. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

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

**Findings**

1.22 Course development and approval processes are overseen by the University. UCFB has a validation flowchart that sets out its own internal processes that align with the University's procedures and help ensure timely development and scrutiny of the proposed programme. The processes and procedures used by the University and the systems within UCFB ensure that academic standards are set at a level that meets the UK threshold standards for qualifications offered and would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.23 The review team explored the effectiveness of the approach by reviewing course approval documents, validation reports and minutes of relevant committees and meeting with staff involved in programme design and approval.

1.24 UCFB's validation flowchart sets out a four-stage process, drawing on internal and University procedures, which culminates in a validation event. Validation is the responsibility of the University and is undertaken in accordance with the University's Policy and Procedure for Approval of Academic Provision and provides a common framework that is applied to all credit-bearing programmes leading to an award of the University. UCFB demonstrated its adherence to the University's procedures relating to the approval of the MSc Football Coaching and Analysis, MSc International Sports Management Online and the BA (Hons) Football Coaching and Talent Development, which commenced in September 2018. The evidence, including programme handbooks, module descriptors, and approval panel reports scrutinised by the review team demonstrated UCFB's compliance with the University's procedures, and the approval notifications received from the University confirm this. Staff confirmed their understanding of the process of procedures involved in course validation and approval.

1.25 External examiners confirmed in their reports that threshold standards are appropriate for each award and that course teams have taken into account Subject Benchmark Statements and other academic standards as appropriate.

1.26 UCFB, through its awarding body, ensures that academic standards are set at a level that meets UK threshold standards for the qualification, and are in accordance with the University's own framework and regulations. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

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

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

**Findings**

1.27 Oversight of qualification approval rests with Buckinghamshire New University (BNU). Qualifications are allocated at the appropriate level in line with the FHEQ and appropriate qualification benchmark statements at the time of validation or revalidation. The Programme Agreement with BNU specifies the responsibilities for the degree programmes delivered by UCFB. Module specifications are designed at approval and outline the learning outcomes that the assessment must achieve. BNU through their Academic Registry is responsible for approving all assessment processes and ensuring that they are fit for purpose. Information on the aims, intended learning outcomes and expected learning achievements for all modules are provided to students in programme handbooks. Learning outcomes are set and delivery is cross-referenced to the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. Grading descriptors are used consistently to secure and meet academic standards.

1.28 Internally, UCFB has devised committee forums that report into the Programme Management Committee and the Executive Management Committee. Both committees report to the Academic Board, which is responsible for overseeing assessment decisions and awards.

1.29 UCFB follows the Operations Manual devised by BNU to ensure compliance with their regulations; for example, UCFB applies the BNU Assessment & Feedback Policy when undertaking its assessment and moderation activities. At a recent periodic review it was agreed that UCFB would devise a parallel document that would reflect its own processes and procedures for assessment. Assessment criteria is moderated and checked to ensure assessment procedures meet the required learning outcomes in a fair and consistent manner. Internal moderation processes involve the use of appropriate sampling procedures to verify that students are meeting the required standards of their awards. External examiners confirm that UCFB has set assessments at the appropriate standard to test the learning outcomes and this has been confirmed in external examiners' reports. Internal exam boards are held after BNU exam boards to confirm academic decisions. The BNU Lead Tutor is invited to attend these meetings. These processes would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.30 The team reviewed the terms of reference, minutes pertaining to the Governing Body, Academic Board, Programme Management Committee, Executive Management Committee, the internal moderation policy, external examiner reports, and engaged with academic and professional staff as well as students.

1.31 UCFB has appropriate processes in place that ensure assessment processes are rigorous, for example, UCFB convenes an internal examination board that confirms the academic decisions of BNU. The external examiner reports have consistently indicated that assessment processes are effective. UCFB also has an internal process for dealing with external examiner reports. The Academic Board retains oversight of all higher education processes. The Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**Level of risk: Low**

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

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

**Findings**

1.32 UCFB has one main franchise partner - Buckinghamshire New University. This franchise arrangement has been in place since 2014. A term of reference has been established between BNU and UCFB that articulates the relationship between both. A Responsibility Checklist has also been provided in the programme handbook.

1.33 UCFB offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at two main campuses – Wembley Stadium and Etihad Stadium Manchester. To support the management of its programmes UCFB has devised a range of committees with oversight of academic standards, this includes the Academic Board, Senior Leadership Team, Executive Management Committee, and Programme Management Committee. The UCFB senior leadership team (SLT) has primary responsibility for the approval of new programmes with support and advice from the Operational Board. New programme concepts are discussed and approved at the Academic Board identifying key leads to produce the business cases prior to submitting to BNU in collaboration with the Curriculum Development Lead. UCFB has devised a programme development flowchart that clearly articulates the process that all new programmes go through. In addition, a specially convened scrutiny panel is established to oversee the process and to provide a degree of independence.

1.34 BNU is responsible for monitoring and reviewing UCFB programmes and does so through the Periodic Review and the Annual Quality and Monitoring Report process. The Annual Quality and Monitoring Report process requires UCFB to produce an annual monitoring report that is then forwarded to the Head of Academic Partnerships. To support UCFB effectively, BNU has appointed a Lead Supervisory Tutor who meets regularly with the Head of Quality to provide advice and support and undertakes the annual partner monitoring visit. In addition, programme areas that have been validated by BNU organise weekly academic staff briefings to inform staff regarding the quality calendar and other academic and institutional matters. The BNU Lead Supervisory Tutor provides additional support through regular auditing before the external examiner visit.

1.35 At an operational level UCFB follows BNU Operations Manual, which contains a range of information staff can access when delivering their programmes. The Operations Manual has been devised to ensure that BNU regulations and procedures for academic and professional standards are met. The Operations Manual also contains a link to the BNU policies that UCFB follows.

1.36 External examiners are appointed by the University. It is the role of the external examiner to confirm that UCFB has set assessments at the appropriate standard to test the learning outcomes and this has been confirmed in external examiner reports. These processes would enable the Expectation to be met.

1.37 The team reviewed the terms of reference and minutes pertaining to the Academic Board, Programme Committee, Executive Management Committee, external examiner reports, Quality Calendar and Monitoring and Review Diagram. The review team also engaged with senior and academic staff as well as support staff.

1.38 UCFB has devised a quality calendar that illustrates the process adopted by UCFB to monitor how programme teams are meeting the academic standards required by its awarding partner. Each programme team is responsible for producing their own annual review report. This report takes into account a range of information including student feedback, external examiner reports and assessment outcomes. Reports are completed by Module Leaders, passed to Programme Leaders who review and forward to the Head of Academies. Final reports are submitted to the Academic Board who have oversight of all higher education provision. Annually UCFB produces an Institutional Report from the collation of all reports with oversight resting with the Principal and Governing Body. The Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

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

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

**Findings**

1.39 UCFB uses external and independent expertise at key stages to set and maintain academic standards. This is through BNU's approval procedures, BNU's supervisory tutors' comprehensive monitoring, external examiners, and external members of the Academic Board, a statutory body accreditation and close integrated professional links.

1.40 The review team concludes that the oversight by BNU and other external involvement and the use made of external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards for the programmes enable the Expectation to be met.

1.41 UCFB clearly demonstrates that external and independent expertise is obtained at key stages of the quality processes. The University contributes significant external expertise to ensure its academic standards are properly set and maintained.

1.42 The review team scrutinised UCFB's processes and their effectiveness through consideration of evidence provided in documented quality assurance procedures, minutes of meetings, external examiner reports, and meetings with staff and students.

1.43 There is appropriate and robust external oversight of academic standards through the approval process. The internal scrutiny process for new programmes requires external academic and industry review. Buckinghamshire New University's programme formal validation processes require external membership of panels. The Partner Approval Panel reports and associated documentation indicate that threshold academic standards are set by reference to the national reference points and confirm that BNU's internal requirements are implemented consistently.

1.44 BNU appoints supervisory tutors who advise on academic standards and the lead tutor reports annually on academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities.

1.45 The University appoints the external examiners to advise on whether the UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved. They strongly agree that the standards are appropriate.

1.46 The Academic Board, which is responsible for academic standards, reports to the Governing Body. The Governing Body has three independent academic members one of whom is the Chair. The minutes reflect consideration of academic standards.

1.47 Additional external referencing is achieved through professional links established by UCFB. There is professional body accreditation for the BSc (Hons) Sports Psychology delivered at both the Wembley campus and at the University. Students are able to enhance their professional and academic skills by studying for Football Association coaching badges

at levels 1 and 2. UCFB is actively engaged with employers and sector partners in the design, content and delivery of its programmes.

1.48 Overall, UCFB is effectively operating in accordance with the requirements of its awarding body to ensure that academic standards are set and maintained. External and independent expertise is used fully at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards and the review team therefore concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low

**Expectation: Met**

**Level of risk: Low**

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

1.49 In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of the academic standards of awards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.50 All the Expectations in this area are met with low levels of associated risk. From its scrutiny of a wide range of evidence, and through meetings with staff and students, the review team found that UCFB is effective in managing its responsibilities, in conjunction with the degree-awarding body, and is effective in maintaining academic standards. Adequate use is made of relevant subject and qualification benchmarks and external expertise in the development of programmes and their subsequent approval and monitoring, and qualifications are set at an appropriate academic level; however, formal arrangements for the oversight of the internal academic frameworks are not always specifically articulated or easy for students and staff to find. The review team consequently recommends that UCFB contextualise the operations manual to establish distinct College quality processes and procedures that underpin quality assurance and improvement.

1.51 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of the degree-awarding body at UCFB **meets** UK expectations.

## 2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

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

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

#### **Findings**

2.1 The University has overall responsibility for the approval of the programmes offered by UCFB. New programmes are developed according to UCFB's validation process flowchart. The flowchart sets out the stages involved in the validation process including the presenting of a business case that is subject to scrutiny prior to submission to the University for validation. The stages within the flowchart are underpinned and aligned to the University's processes and procedures, this allows the Expectation to be met.

2.2 The review team explored the effectiveness of UCFB's processes for programme design, development and approval by reviewing documents, minutes and validation reports associated with the stages in the validation process flowchart, together with meeting staff.

2.3 Central to the development of UCFB's programme portfolio is the Academic Development Plan 2017-22 that aligns to the Strategic Plan. The Academic Development Plan sets out the schedule for the annual development of programmes for the duration of the plan. UCFB follows the University's Approval of Academic Provision procedures. Each programme is required to produce a business case, using the University's template, that provides information to judge the viability, feasibility and industry need for the proposed programme. As part of UCFB's internal processes, business cases are subject to approval by the Scrutiny Panel who have the remit for ensuring the academic standards of the programme and that the programme of study is designed and delivered appropriately. Business cases are, in turn, submitted to the University's Academic Planning Committee. Once this approval has been obtained College staff, with support from the University, prepare documents ready for validation, which include programme specifications and module descriptors. Before submission to the University, these are reviewed by the Scrutiny Panel. Evidence considered by the review team demonstrated the effectiveness of the use of business cases, the role of the Scrutiny Panel, and the working relationship with the University.

2.4 The University is responsible for validation and approval of programmes offered by UCFB. UCFB works closely with the University to ensure that all necessary documentation and representation is in place, in a timely manner, for the validation event. Evidence considered by the review team demonstrates UCFB's compliance with the University's processes and procedures including how UCFB has met any conditions identified in the Validation Panel Report.

2.5 Staff confirmed their understanding and involvement in programme development and the role of the Academic Development Plan and the operation of UCFB's internal processes, together with following the University's validation processes and procedures. The recent Academic Partner Periodic Review report confirmed that programmes are 'developed with consideration given to subject benchmark standards, with input from academic and industry experts'.

2.6 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**Level of risk: Low**

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

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

**Findings**

2.7 UCFB has sole responsibility for recruitment activities and, since Sept 2017, runs its own admissions process via UCAS. Admissions procedures are set out in the UCFB Operations Manual, to which three processes for admissions are appended in flowchart form. These cover direct applications to UCFB via its UCAS account, applications via BNU's UCAS account and applications via BNU's application portal. UCFB also advertises an online application form for direct applications via its website.

2.8 Detailed course information is found in the printed College prospectus and on the website. Information on how to apply is found on UCFB's website and is given by teaching and support staff at College open days where prospective students have the opportunity to participate in taster classes. These processes would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.9 The review team examined the effectiveness of the admissions policies and procedures by analysing the documentation including the operations manual and appendices, the complaints procedure, and by examining the website. The team also held meetings with senior, teaching and support staff, and students.

2.10 The operations manual indicates that there are two models for admissions with the awarding body: Model A, using BNU's UCAS or Admissions Portal; and Model B, using the provider's own UCAS or Admissions Portal. The Operations Manual further indicates that the provider makes use of Model B. However, the appendices to the operations manual demonstrate that there are in fact three models and, in practice, the provider follows Model C. Unlike Models A and B, this model does not make clear distinction between applications via UCAS and direct applications via the provider's own portal. Furthermore, it does not indicate when an applicant should use UCAS and when they should use the provider's own portal, although this is articulated separately in the Admissions Policy. In addition, while UCFB follows the BNU Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) Policy and makes provisions for applicants with non-standard or borderline qualifications, within the three processes appended to the operations manual, there is no reference to APEL. Instead, according to the processes articulated, applicants who do not meet the entry requirements are rejected and, therefore, this process is not compatible with the BNU policy, or the provider's own Admissions Policy. Staff met by the team reported that the APEL policy had only been used once. In addition, the three processes articulated state that students are given unconditional offers to study at UCFB; however, in practice applicants receive conditional offers. The review team therefore found that the admissions process as articulated in the operations manual is not sufficiently clear for the effective working of the process in practice.

2.11 UCFB is currently undertaking a review that is being coordinated by the Admissions Working Group established by the Admissions Department and Academic Board. However, this review is limited to entry requirements only and not the admissions process more widely. The review team therefore **recommends** that UCFB review the admissions policy to ensure that it is transparent, accurate and inclusive to all applicants.

2.12 The review team concludes that the the Expectation is not met and the level of risk is moderate.

**Expectation: Not met**  
**Level of risk: Moderate**

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

**Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching***

**Findings**

2.13 UCFB articulates and systematically reviews and enriches the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices through various methods including external examiners' reports, annual programme reports, teaching observations and student feedback. These are underpinned by the Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy. The Programme Leaders are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the programmes and the Programme Management Committee monitors the programmes' performance and academic standards. The approaches to learning and teaching are explained within each module descriptor detailed in the programme handbooks and are introduced to students during their induction. The external examiners' reports are considered at the Programme Management Committee meetings resulting in an action plan.

2.14 The learning and teaching opportunities are varied and include case studies, live briefs, professional practice, external speakers, visits and student-led events, which enable students to achieve the learning outcomes and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking. Students have opportunities to contextualise learning in problem-solving and reflection in relation to their employability skills. The learning resources, including an online dedicated learning environment, support these opportunities. All full-time teaching staff and visiting guest lecturers are routinely formally observed. Staff development includes opportunities for internal training and continuing professional development.

2.15 UCFB obtains formal feedback from students on the quality of teaching and learning at regular intervals. The programme review and evaluation processes, using datasets from module evaluations and the national student survey (NSS), provide overall analysis of student views. This includes views on programme delivery, resources, development and information, advice and guidance.

2.16 The processes described above enable this Expectation to be met.

2.17 The review team examined the documents relevant to learning and teaching described above and held meetings with senior staff, teaching staff, professional support staff and students.

2.18 Students say that they appreciate the learning opportunities presented, which is supported by the student submission. The University Partnership Tutor states that although the participation rate for the Module Evaluation Questionnaire and the NSS satisfaction rate are poor, nevertheless, the Student Council reported that, overall, students were happy with the teaching quality and support mechanisms designed to assist students' academic development. Furthermore, the general feedback from external examiners was commending. Learning and teaching is enhanced by a variety of teaching and learning strategies, which are introduced by Advanced Teaching Practitioners with a recently appointed Lead for Learning and Teaching. The external examiner reports are all complimentary about the standard of students' work.

2.19 To assure itself of effective learning and teaching the University approves staff teaching on the programmes it validates through scrutiny of staff CVs. The teaching staff, who all have or are working towards a higher degree, demonstrate a sound understanding of the requirements of delivering and assessing the programmes. The Programme Leader Reports allow for comment specifically on how the curriculum is being enhanced by research informed teaching.

2.20 UCFB also ensures itself that everyone involved in teaching is appropriately qualified, supported and developed through teaching observation and extensive staff development opportunities. New academic staff undergo an induction process with respect to strategies for learning and teaching and assessment. They are observed within six weeks of commencing employment to receive developmental feedback. All staff have access to the partner University's programmes together with developmental opportunities to enhance their teaching and assessment knowledge and skills, with teaching remission and funding opportunities to complete teaching qualifications and higher degrees. Good practice is shared in a formal format at committee meetings. Teaching staff are able to discuss how this had impacted on their teaching practice.

2.21 The review team concludes that the arrangements in place to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning are appropriate. The Expectation is therefore met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

**Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement**

**Findings**

2.22 Student development and achievement at UCFB is determined by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and the Employability and Enrichment Strategy, which emphasise continuous development, improvement and reviewing of learning and teaching activities. There are comprehensive student support systems. The Learning Support Team and the Student Services Department provide a wide range of pastoral advice and study guidance, regularly monitor and evaluate individual student's development and discuss individual student's progress. Students receive 1:1 and group tutorials, regular academic mentoring, and attend drop-in sessions. The Students' Union and Athletic Union support the sports and social dimension of the student experience. There are various arrangements for students with particular needs including full diagnostic assessments and provision of specialist software. The employability and enrichment programme provides extensive opportunities for students' professional development.

2.23 UCFB has in place arrangements that enable this Expectation to be met.

2.24 The review team tested the effectiveness of the UCFB approach to the development of students' academic, personal and professional potential through discussions with staff, students and the scrutiny of a range of documents.

2.25 UCFB has comprehensive arrangements that enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. Students have a thorough induction programme and are provided with a student handbook that details all the requirements of their programme, as well as support mechanisms. Students report that they are satisfied with both formal and informal academic support.

2.26 UCFB invites students to declare additional learning needs during application and at registration. Students identified as at risk are well supported with robust systems. Students say they are comfortable in approaching any member of staff if they are having difficulties and are very satisfied with the support arrangements in place. This is annually reviewed by the student services section.

2.27 UCFB attaches great operational and strategic importance to both skills and careers development in its provision. Its focus on student employability is explicit and demonstrated through its employability and enrichment activities. There are extensive arrangements for students to engage with sports specialists to support their learning and preparation for future careers. There are regular opportunities to involve external professionals in a wide range of activities such as the Guest Speaker programme, work placements, training programmes and coaching qualifications. The external examiner commends the level 2 coaching qualifications that are offered to students. The wide complementary curriculum, extensive external links and access to professional expertise ensure currency of the provision. This also enables students to develop their professional potential, which was commended in the BNU validation report, and the external examiner commented on the strength of the students' employability. The Employability and Enrichment Strategy identifies key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources that enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The review team considers that employment and complementary curricula opportunities that enable students to develop their personal, academic and professional potential is **good practice**.

2.28 The Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**Level of risk: Low**

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

**Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement**

**Findings**

2.29 UCFB has a multi-faceted approach to student engagement. The main mechanism for engaging with the student voice is UCFB's system of student representation. Student representatives are elected from each tutorial group to attend meetings at programme level and meetings of the student councils, which are the main deliberative bodies for the student voice at each campus. Heads of department report to the student council to close the feedback loop.

2.30 Student representatives receive guidance on the expectation of their role as student members of the council in written form and in an induction session and they are supported by the Quality Officer. Students also sit on a variety of committees including Academic Board and the Governing Body.

2.31 In addition to the student representative system, students complete both end-of-module and mid-module feedback forms, which are considered by teaching staff, programme leaders and student council. Responses to student feedback form part of annual action plans and programme reports. These arrangements allow the Expectation to be met.

2.32 The review team examined the effectiveness of the procedures in place to engage students by examining the student handbook, programme handbooks, the student submission and minutes and terms of reference of committees, including the Academic Board and student council. The review team also held meetings with teaching and support staff, senior staff, students, and student representatives.

2.33 The review team found that the procedures for engaging with students work effectively in practice. Evidence from documentation and from meeting students showed that there is a supportive and open environment within which students and staff freely engage in discussions, both within and in addition to the formal student engagement structures. Student representatives met by the review team reported that they were appropriately equipped to carry out their role and, while some inconsistencies on the effectiveness of student representatives were discussed, on the whole students reported that they feel able to make use of the student representatives when needed. Students also reported that the module review forms, in particular the mid-module forms, were an effective way of capturing their views and that staff respond appropriately to them.

2.34 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

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

**Findings**

The BNU has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that assessment maps to learning outcomes, and this is described in section A3.2. However, UCFB is responsible for the delivery of all assessment processes including conducting assessments, marking and moderation of assessments and convening internal examination boards. The Programme Agreement indicates the responsibilities around assessment. UCFB designs all assessments and submits them to the University for approval and edit where necessary. The module specification and the module guide outline the learning outcomes that the assessment must achieve. UCFB follows BNU moderation processes that include the establishment of internal moderation meetings and completion of BNU moderation reports. The Lead Supervisory Tutor also provides additional checking through an internal audit process. Moderated work is then forwarded to the external examiner. UCFB schedules internal examination boards to ratify the decisions prior to submitting to BNU. BNU schedule annual examination boards that UCFB staff will attend. Decisions are agreed at the University exam board meetings. These processes would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.35 The review team considered a wide range of documentation including the operations manuals, policy, procedures relevant to assessment, external examiner reports and spoke to staff and students.

2.36 UCFB follows the BNU Operations Manual, which reflects the requirements of its awarding partners, such as policies and processes that aim to promote transparency around assessment, for example extenuating circumstances, student complaints policy, equality and diversity policy, and recognition of prior learning policy. Staff are responsible for promoting academic practices and students are required to submit all work using plagiarism-detection software. UCFB ensures that students receive appropriate information about their assessments in programme handbooks and also on the student hub. Students have indicated that they are effectively supported by their tutors and study support tutors through regular formal and informal meetings and through the monthly student council meetings. Students who also present with learning support are signposted to student services who devise an action plan, which is then monitored should further assistance be required or reduced. UCFB has a tutorial system that is designed to provide both direct academic and pastoral care support. UCFB also uses a student tracking system to monitor student progress. UCFB holds its own exam boards following examination boards held by BNU.

2.37 BNU has clearly stated guidelines for the admission of students as outlined in its Admissions Policy that UCFB implements. Furthermore, there are clearly stated entry requirements that are reviewed annually and updated. Currently, UCFB uses the APEL system devised by BNU. Staff indicate that students are made aware of the policy through the Student Handbook and during induction; however, the process for accepting a prospective student with experiential learning was unclear and the process did not coherently link to the Admissions Policy. For example, it was unclear at what age a student is categorised as a mature student. An APEL process is in place as noted in Expectation B2; however, the review team identified that the 'UCFB APEL and Mature Student Policy'

welcomes applicants from all ages and backgrounds. Yet the website identifies mature students as 'typically over the age of 21'. The review team considers that this conflict in wording may discourage applicants who are under 21 who may have a portfolio of appropriate evidence suitable for APEL. This is further compounded, as mentioned in Section C, by the APEL policy not being available in the UCFB policies and documentation area of the website. In addition, the University's APEL Policy does not refer to age but focuses on the validity of evidence presented to demonstrate the equivalence of learning. The review team therefore **recommends** that UCFB operates an Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning process that is equitable.

2.38 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

**Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining**

**Findings**

2.39 BNU, which has explicit policies and regulations appoints and employs independent external examiners for all higher education programmes. BNU manages and trains the external examiners with induction programmes at both the University and UCFB. BNU has an external examiner handbook. External examiners submit a written report to the University on a standardised template. The reporting form includes sections on course assignments, programme content, student progression and achievement, support and organisation, response to previous reports with a section on good practice and enhanced learning opportunities. The Programme Leaders' reports contain a section for an overview of external examiners' comments.

2.40 The use of external examiners' reports and the processes in place to ensure that their comments are considered and responded to allow the Expectation to be met.

2.41 To test the Expectation the review team examined BNU external examiner documentation, annual monitoring reports, external examiners' reports, policies and procedures. It also considered the UCFB regulations and committee minutes. The team met staff and students to establish the use made of external examiners by UCFB.

2.42 UCFB is clear about its responsibilities with regards to the appointment and induction of external examiners, and those of its awarding partners. The external examiners attend the assessment boards. UCFB uses external examiners' reports thoroughly to secure academic standards of the higher education programme. The external examiners' reports demonstrate that they give UCFB impartial and independent advice, as well as comment on the assessment processes, the academic standards and on the achievement of students. These reports show that external examiners are informed about the assessment practices and procedures and they understand the importance of their contribution to quality assurance and enhancements. Their reports confirm that they have sufficient evidence to fulfil their role effectively and access students' work through the VLE. The Programme Management Committee meeting minutes show a careful analysis of the external examiners' reports and the subsequent responses by the programme teams and the Head of Academics and that the issues raised in these reports contribute to an action plan. Students and staff show some awareness of the function of the external examiner and say they can access their reports electronically although the students did not show a complete understanding of the role.

2.43 The review team concludes that UCFB through its relationship with its awarding partner and its oversight makes good use of the external examiners. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

### **Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review**

#### **Findings**

2.44 Responsibility for monitoring and review is clearly articulated in the responsibility checklist. UCFB is ultimately responsible for monitoring and reviewing its own programmes and does so through the Periodic Review and the Annual Quality and Monitoring Report process. Internally each programme team is responsible for producing their own Annual Review Report. This is forwarded to the Academic Board. From these reports UCFB is then able to produce an Institutional Report of which the Principal and Governing Body have oversight. These processes would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.45 The review team reviewed the terms of reference and minutes pertaining to the Academic Board, Academic Assessment Panel, the Internal Moderation Policy, external examiner reports and minutes from the Subject Standard Board.

2.46 The Academic Board retains oversight of all monitoring and review processes that take place in UCFB. This Board is chaired by the Principal and meets every semester. Each programme team is responsible for producing their own Annual Review Report. This report takes into account a range of information including student feedback, external examiner reports, and assessment outcomes. UCFB has also produced a Quality Calendar that further supports College staff by indicating what activities they should be undertaking to ensure reports are completed.

2.47 The 2015 QAA Report highlighted concern in quality monitoring and review and the use of data to evaluate performance. From the documentation available at the time of the review and discussions with professional and academic staff it is evident that good progress has been made including greater use of mid and end-of-semester module evaluation and greater use is being made of attrition and achievement data.

2.48 A line of inquiry examined by the review team was the application of the Quality Calendar across campuses, and the extent of standardisation between the Etihad and Wembley campuses and the impact this would have on the student experience. At a strategic level UCFB has made a committed effort through a similar management structure and students are being elected within both campuses. However, there was some variability in how this worked in practice. For example, the review team heard that although staff come together on Learning and Teaching days and moderation events, there were few other opportunities for staff on the same programme to come together to share experience or disseminate effective practice. At the time of the review UCFB had not organised any inter-campus engagement activities for students. Students have been provided with a tutorial slot; however, there was a level of variability on how this had been time-tabled across both campuses and there was a lack of understanding where students could express dissatisfaction. The review team **recommends** that while the Expectation is met and the risk is low UCFB should embed a rigorous quality assurance cycle around its monitoring and review processes to ensure robust cross-standardisation that promotes the quality of the student learning experience.

2.49 The Expectation is met and the level of risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**

**Level of risk: Low**

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

**Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints**

**Findings**

2.50 UCFB follows the awarding body's policies and procedures for complaints and academic appeals. All complaints are first dealt with informally by the Quality Team and the relevant member of staff or department within UCFB. If complaints are not resolved satisfactorily at this stage, then the formal processes will commence with the University. Academic appeals are handled by the awarding body and students are directed to them by support staff within UCFB.

2.51 The complaints and appeals procedures are made available to students via the VLE and are referenced in the induction programme delivered by teaching and support staff across all programmes. Staff are trained on how to manage complaints and appeals. These arrangements would enable the Expectation to be met.

2.52 The review team tested the effectiveness of the procedures for handling student complaints and academic appeals by examining the Operations Manual, the BNU complaints procedure, the BNU Academic Appeals procedure, UCFB website and the VLE. The review team also held meetings with senior staff, support staff, teaching staff and students.

2.53 The review team found that the procedures for academic appeals and student complaints work effectively in practice. Staff met by the review team were aware of the correct procedures for handling complaints and appeals. Although students reported being unaware of where to find the correct procedures, none of the students had felt the need to do so and all the students stated that their first port of call would be either their personal tutor or the VLE. The review team was given a demonstration of the VLE by the lead student representative, which affirmed that the policies were easily accessible.

2.54 While the review team is satisfied that UCFB makes its complaints and appeals procedures sufficiently accessible for current UCFB students, they were not visible on UCFB's new website for prospective or current applicants to view. This is discussed further in Part C - Information.

2.55 Overall, UCFB has clear procedures in place for making complaints or academic appeals. Staff are aware of their responsibilities in supporting and signposting students and students feel sufficiently confident that they would know where to find the necessary information if needed.

2.56 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

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

**Findings**

2.57 UCFB does not deliver learning opportunities with other organisations. In addition, there are no credit-bearing units or modules regarding work experience or work placements with their programmes. UCFB does, however, offer work experience and placement opportunities for students as part of its employability and enrichment strategy. The processes and documentation underpinning these work experience placement opportunities allow the Expectation to be met.

2.58 The review team explored this area through the review of documentation available and discussion with staff and students.

2.59 UCFB currently delivers all aspects of its programmes and has no arrangements whereby delivery of learning opportunities is devolved to a third party. Work placement activities are currently extracurricular and managed through the Employability and Enrichment programme. The Employment and Enrichment team ensures that arrangements are in place for providing support to students in acquiring optional work placements. The informative Student/Intern Placement Handbook has been developed to help students understand and manage their placement experience. In addition, a student placement agreement is drawn up that sets out expectations of UCFB, employer and student. Students confirm the value of their work placement opportunities. Students are also able to draw on their work experience for module F6663 Professional Practice Portfolio. Although the module descriptor refers in the indicative content to 'participating in and successfully completing a work placement', the assessment, marked fully by College staff, involves reflective writing and does not specifically require students to be assessed on their work placements thereby not disadvantaging students who have not completed a work placement.

2.60 During the visit the review team was made aware of the Diploma in Sports Management that is studied at the Real Madrid Graduate School. Consequently, the review team sought information on the relationship between the Diploma in Sports Management and the MSc International Sports Management. It was confirmed that the Diploma is an additional enrolment and completely separate to the full-time MSc programme. The review team, however, noted the ambiguities in the wording of the published information relating to this arrangement and this is discussed further in Part C: Information.

2.61 Overall, arrangements for the management of the extracurricular work placement opportunities are managed appropriately.

2.62 The review team therefore considers that the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

**Quality Code, *Chapter B11: Research Degrees***

### **Findings**

2.63 This Expectation is not applicable.

## The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

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

2.65 All the Expectations in this area apart from B2 are met with low levels of associated risk. Expectation B2 is not met and is judged a moderate risk.

2.66 The review team identified good practice in the Employability and Enrichment curricular opportunities that enable students to develop their personal, academic and professional potential. However, the review team also recommended that UCFB review the admissions policy to articulate a process that is transparent, accurate and inclusive to all applicants and that UCFB ensure that it operates an Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning process that is equitable. Furthermore, the review team recommends that UCFB should embed a rigorous quality assurance cycle around its monitoring and review processes to ensure robust cross-standardisation that promotes the quality of the student learning experience.

2.67 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at UCFB **meets** UK expectations.

### 3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

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

#### Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

##### Findings

3.1 UCFB provides a wide range of information for its intended audiences. The Public Information Committee (PIC) is responsible for ensuring that all information is scrutinised prior to publication and addition to the website and/or VLE. The University's Operation Manual sets out the responsibilities and procedures to ensure that all marketing and advertising material published by UCFB is correct and that an audit trail is maintained. Information is published both in hardcopy and electronically including the use of social media. This published information underpins the pre-entry, on programme and exit stages of the student journey together with ensuring the needs of academic standards relating to programme delivery and student achievement are met. The processes in place allow the Expectation to be met.

3.2 The review team scrutinised a variety of published information, both electronically and in hardcopy, and met staff and students. Additionally, internal policies and procedures together with the minutes of the PIC were considered to test whether information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.3 The website and prospectus provide information for prospective students on UCFB's purpose and opportunities for study and employment. Information is also made available on the website regarding fees and terms and conditions that align to the Competition and Marketing Authority's guidelines. The privacy policy sets out how UCFB complies with data protection requirements. UCFB provides a wide range of information on its website promoting opportunities available to students together with activities, such as Open Days, to engage students and provide information on UCFB and programmes offered. Students confirm the usefulness of the information provided by UCFB to help inform their study choices.

3.4 Information for current students is readily available through student handbooks and the VLE. The comprehensive student services handbook provides students with a range of information to support their study. Programme handbooks are clearly written in an accessible style providing the necessary information for students to understand the structure and assessment of their programme together with module descriptors and information to support students' academic study. The availability of this information was illustrated and confirmed by a demonstration of the VLE. Students are positive about the on-course and supporting information provided and the usefulness of the VLE. They were particularly appreciative of the app that was available to allow access to the VLE. Additionally, the student services monthly newsletter and employment and enrichment newsletter provide useful current information for students.

3.5 UCFB's operation manual focuses on ensuring that any representation of the University within UCFB's website and published information is appropriate and this was confirmed by staff and the University. The PIC has the remit of ensuring marketing materials are 100 per cent accurate and compliant with external organisation requirements. The PIC minutes focus on ensuring that information is 'technically accurate' in respect of names, job titles and typographical errors and imagery is appropriate. This was particularly

demonstrated in the minutes relating to the preparation of the 2020 prospectus.

3.6 The review team, however, identified an ambiguity within the publicly available printed documents describing the relationship between the full-time MSc International Sport Management and the Diploma in Sport Management that is studied at Real Madrid; UCFB confirmed that the Diploma in Sport Management is an additional separately validated qualification. The language, however, in the full-time MSc International Sport Management brochure states that 'students undertake a period of study at Real Madrid Graduate School' and in the Undergraduate Prospectus 2020-21 states 'as part of the on-campus MSc International Sport Management programme, students will spend time in Spain at Escuela Universitaria Real Madrid, Universidad Europea'. This inconsistency within the information was acknowledged by staff met by members of the review team. The review team also sought clarification on the availability of College policies and procedures on the recently rebranded website. UCFB provided the link to where this information could be found on the website. The link, however, landed on a webpage titled 'UCFB policies and documentation' but the page only contains information relating to UCFB's commitment to equality and diversity and QAA approval. The only College policy found on this page was the Equality and Diversity Policy that was in fact the 'Equality and Diversity Report 2017-18'. Although there is information on the website relating to complaints with links to UCFB's Student Recruitment Complaint procedure and the University's Student Complaint procedure, this information is not discoverable through the website search facility using the terms 'complaints'; 'complaints policy'; or 'complaints procedure'. Similarly, a search for the term 'APEL' yielded no positive results and a search for the term 'Accreditation of prior experiential learning' yielded 233 results; however, none of the results sampled provided webpages that referred to the search term.

3.7 Although there is a process in place for the management of information, there does not appear to be sufficient application of these processes in scrutinising the content of published information, making available externally policies and procedures, and testing the website's search capability and capacity to ensure the accuracy, trustworthiness and accessibility of the information provided. Consequently, the review team **recommends** that UCFB review processes for the management of the quality of information about learning opportunities to ensure information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.8 Although UCFB has processes in place to meet the Expectation, the review team found that these processes were not sufficiently applied and, consequently, this impacted on the fitness for purpose, accessibility and trustworthiness of the information provided for their intended audiences.

3.9 Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is not met and the risk is moderate.

**Expectation: Not Met**  
**Level of risk: Moderate**

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

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

3.11 The review team scrutinised a range of documentation (both published in hard copy and electronic versions) made available to prospective, current and former students, and other stakeholders.

3.12 Overall, the review team found that UCFB has considered some of the formal requirements of Expectation C and has demonstrated its compliance with aspects of the Expectation. However, the review team noted a number of shortfalls in UCFB's approach to the management of the quality of information. The review team recommends that UCFB review its processes for the management of the quality of information about learning opportunities to ensure information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.13 The review team concludes that the quality of the information about learning opportunities at UCFB **requires improvement to meet** UK expectations.

## 4 Judgement: The enhancement of student learning opportunities

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

### Findings

4.1 UCFB's approach to enhancing student learning opportunities is outlined in its Strategic Plan. Its approach to enhancement, at an operational level, is to ensure that all practices relating to the delivery and management of higher education are underpinned by an effective student voice and a top down/bottom up approach through the committee structure.

4.2 UCFB has devised a number of deliberative committees that oversee and have responsibility for the management of higher education including enhancement. The Academic Board is the primary committee that all other committees report into and it also reports to the Governing Body. Students are also represented in the different committees reflecting an effective student voice.

4.3 UCFB has developed an Enrichment and Employability Strategy that is intended to support College staff in developing greater industry engagement links and promote an industry facing curriculum. The Enrichment and Employability Manager organises guest speakers to visit UCFB to enhance the students' learning experience in their programme area. Feedback from students has improved this process through more targeted guest speakers. Field trips and international visits are also organised for students. UCFB has also developed a UCFB Award consisting of Bronze, Silver and Gold Award enrichment programmes that enhances future employability.

4.4 The student representative process is well structured and established within UCFB. Students are effectively engaged through the Students' Union and Student Council. Student Ambassadors have also been appointed and students are represented at Governing Body level. UCFB has also established a Student Satisfaction Working Group that is focused on promoting greater engagement but also ensuring that student requests are listened to and where appropriate acted upon. This level of engagement has led to some enhancements for students, for example improvements in the student hub, introduction of a student app, bespoke library facilities and greater student space.

4.5 Course teams meet weekly to discuss experience and identify actions that need to be addressed, and which can lead to enhancements. Staff development is readily made available to staff and new staff are adequately supported. UCFB has introduced Research and Scholarly Activity Days, which staff are actively participating in, and staff have started to engage with the Higher Education Academy. Staff are provided with opportunities to come together throughout the year (3 times) to share effective practice at a wider college level.

4.6 The review team identified a range of opportunities where staff and students are able to promote enhancement. These were not linked by a coherent and measurable strategy. The review team **recommends** that UCFB develop and implement a more systematic approach to monitoring, measuring and reporting enhancement.

4.7 The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

## The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.8 In reaching its judgement about the enhancement of learning opportunities the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.9 The review team found that UCFB is generally effective in its enhancement of student learning opportunities. However, the team noted that the enhancement opportunities could be better exploited with a greater strategic focus and recommends that UCFB develop a more systematic approach to student enhancement that can be monitored and evaluated effectively.

4.10 The review team concludes that the enhancement of student learning opportunities at UCFB **meets** UK expectations.

## Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 21-24 of the [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\) handbook](#).

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

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

### Academic standards

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

### Award

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

### Awarding organisation

An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

### Blended learning

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

### Credit(s)

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

### Degree-awarding body

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

### Distance learning

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

### Dual award or double award

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

### e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

### **Enhancement**

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

### **Expectations**

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

### **Flexible and distributed learning**

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

### **Framework**

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

### **Framework for higher education qualifications**

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

### **Good practice**

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

### **Learning opportunities**

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

### **Learning outcomes**

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

### **Multiple awards**

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

### **Operational definition**

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

### **programme (of study)**

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

**programme specifications**

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

**Quality Code**

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

**Reference points**

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

**Self-evaluation document**

A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

**Subject Benchmark Statement**

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

**Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)**

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

**Threshold academic standard**

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

**Virtual learning environment (VLE)**

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

**Widening participation**

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

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