8 Review at institutional level relates to all educational provision for which the institution has responsibility, including undergraduate, postgraduate (taught and research), full-time, part-time, collaborative, overseas, distance and internet learning. The self-evaluation should reflect all of an institution's activities covered by these areas. Collaborative activities need not be included if it has been agreed that these will be subject to a separate review. In all other cases, the self-evaluation should consider the ways in which the institution addresses the precepts of the section of the *Code of practice* on collaborative provision.

Structure, content and length of the self-evaluation

9 Institutions are invited to write their self-evaluations bearing in mind that review teams will produce a report that focuses on the questions contained in paragraph 2 above.

In preparing its self-evaluation, an institution should:

i describe and analyse any developments since the last HEQC/QAA quality audit/institutional review (including the Interim appraisal meeting);

ii describe and analyse its responses to individual subject reviews undertaken since the last interim appraisal meeting and the ways in which lessons learnt from these have been taken into account in the enhancement of institutional practice;

iii describe briefly the key features of its processes for assuring the academic standards of its awards and the quality of its programmes focusing on the two main areas of scrutiny contained in paragraph 2 above;

iv identify any precepts in the Code of practice to which it is not adhering, explaining what alternative approaches have been taken to ensure an effect equivalent to that intended by the precept;

v provide a view on the perceived strengths and limitations of its current institutional quality assurance arrangements; and

vi describe and discuss its intended strategy for the next three years to further enhance practice and remedy any shortcomings it has identified.

10 In preparing their self-evaluations, institutions may find it helpful to bear in mind, as prompts, the criteria applied to institutions seeking powers to award degrees or designation as universities. These include (among others) the requirement that:

- they have clear and consistently applied mechanisms for establishing their academic objectives and outcomes;
- they seek to ensure that their programmes of study consistently meet stated objectives and outcomes;
- programme performance is carefully and regularly monitored;
- the effectiveness of their learning and teaching infrastructure is carefully monitored;
- the academic and related support requirements of students studying away from the campus are taken into account;
- the standards of students' achievements are maintained at a recognised level, and there is a strategy for developing the quality of academic provision;
- effective action is taken to address weaknesses, promote strengths, and demonstrate accountability;
- their administrative systems are sufficient to manage their operations now and in the foreseeable future;

- the qualities and competencies of staff are appropriate for an institution with degree-awarding powers;
- staff are actively engaged with the pedagogic development of their discipline;
- staff maintain high professional standards and willingly accept the professional responsibilities associated with operating in a university environment.

11 Self-evaluations may typically be 30 to 40 pages in length, although there will be no penalty for shorter or longer submissions. A successful self-evaluation will minimise the need for further clarification by the review team, and provide a reliable starting point for the review visit, so keeping to a minimum the amount of time the team needs to spend collecting additional evidence.

Documentation linked to the self-evaluation

12 So far as possible, the self-evaluation should be a self-standing document. It should not need to be accompanied by numerous other papers. However, institutions may, if they wish, supplement their self-evaluation with any other documents they believe will help review teams to a fuller understanding of the institution and its structure and function. Following its briefing meeting, the team may ask for some key documents to be circulated to its members in advance of the visit, but the quantity of papers requested for such advance circulation will be kept to an absolute minimum.

13 The self-evaluation should also include a list of all collaborative partnerships in which the institution has a responsibility for an award and/or for the quality of provision. This list should include partnerships with institutions and other bodies, both in the UK and in other countries, and should include all validations; franchises; consortia; articulation and accreditation agreements; and distance learning partnerships, including those involving facilitating agents.

Confidentiality

14 The self-evaluation remains confidential to the Agency, but it will be available to the Agency's academic reviewers undertaking subject reviews. It is likely that the report will refer to and include quotations from the self-evaluation.

Annex M - Guidance on producing the institutional review report

Introduction

1 This Annex offers guidance on preparing and drafting reports of institutional reviews. It should be read in conjunction with relevant sections of the *Handbook*, in particular paragraphs 121 to 128.

2 Each institutional review report will contain sections as follows:

- brief contextual introduction;
- picture of the Institution as provided by the self-evaluation;
- overall approach to quality assurance as observed by the review team;
- commentary on the awarding body function;
- Code of practice: adherence;
- summary;

• action points, and any exemplary features.

There will also be two appendices:

- a tabular presentation of key numerical data relating to the time of the review;
- a list of collaborative provision and awards.

3 These sections may be further sub-divided depending on the matters addressed in each review.

4 Each section will be drafted by a member of the review team. Allocation of responsibility for drafting sections will be agreed at the briefing meeting. Sections will be constructed in the form:

Description/Analysis/Judgement

Sections of the report

5 The sections of the report will be constructed as follows:

Section i Brief contextual introduction

This section will provide a thumbnail sketch of the institution and its main characteristics, as well as an outline of the review process. It will summarise the general outcomes of subject and programme reviews and will identify the main topics identified for the review and the reasons they have been chosen. It will also provide information about collaborative activity and how this has been dealt with in the report.

[Target: 1,000 words]

Section ii Picture of the institution as provided by the self-evaluation This section will describe and analyse the self-evaluation and the picture of the institution that it paints. It will compare this picture with that derived from the Agency's initial or institutional profile and the record of achievement demonstrated by subject and programme review reports. It will identify any apparent major discrepancies for later discussion in the report. It will also highlight the strengths and limitations that the institution has recognised for itself. By the end of this section the reader should be clear about those matters addressed in the selfevaluation with which the review team is satisfied, and those targeted by the review team for particular consideration during the review. [Target: 1,500 words]

Section iii Overall approach to quality assurance as observed by the review team This section will contain a view of the effectiveness of the Institution's strategic approach to quality management as evidenced by a reading of the self-evaluation, subject review reports, other relevant documents, and discussions during the review visit. It will report on the adequacy of the approach as a basis for present and future security of the academic standards of its awards and the quality of its provision, including provision offered in collaboration with partners or at a distance. It will describe in outline the key features of the institution's general arrangements for managing quality and standards; relevant recent and proposed further developments; and the extent to which the totality of available evidence demonstrates both the institution's capacity for critical self-evaluation and its willingness to act upon that self-evaluation.

If major changes in the institution's academic or management structures are being, or have recently been, introduced, this section may include a discussion of the way in which these changes have been managed.

[Target: 1,500 words]

Section iv Commentary on the awarding body function

This section will provide a commentary about the way the institution manages the 'awarding body function'. It will cover a number of topics, including the soundness of the administrative

procedures the institution follows when awarding degrees and other qualifications. It will also comment on the institution's role as a member of the UK's higher education community, charged with responsibility for granting nationally (and internationally) recognised academic awards in a coherent and consistent manner. In doing this it will analyse how policies and procedures relating to academic standards meet the expectations of the higher education sector as a whole (through, for example, implementation of the qualifications framework, subject benchmark statements and the *Code of practice*), as well as those of the institution itself, and will provide a view on its effectiveness in achieving these objectives. The extent to which these matters are dealt with cogently and candidly in the institution's self-evaluation, drawing where appropriate on subject level review reports, will be an important contributory factor in the review team's ability to judge how far the Agency can have confidence in the institution as an effective awarding body.

In this section the report will look particularly at internal procedures for:

- definition and maintenance of academic standards;
- student assessment and classification of awards, including the role and use made of external examiners;
- assurance of internal and external comparability of academic standards;
- evaluation and improvement, and development, of its procedures for the management of academic standards.

[Target: 1,500 words]

Section v Code of practice: adherence

This section will report specifically on the way the institution is tackling the expectations of the Agency's *Code of practice*. In its self-evaluation the institution will have stated that it is adhering to all of the precepts of the *Code*, or will have indicated where development is still taking place, or will have explained where an alternative approach is being taken. This statement will, so far as possible, be published verbatim in the report. The report will then discuss in detail any major areas of non-adherence that have been examined in the course of the review. In all cases, it will include discussion of the institution's responses to the sections of the *Code* dealing with:

- programme approval, monitoring and review;
- assessment of students;
- external examining; and
- collaborative provision.

This section will indicate whether the Agency considers that any non-adherence is sufficiently material for it to wish to qualify the level of confidence it has in the institution's capacity and effectiveness to function as an awarding body or responsible higher education institution. [Target: 1,000 words]

Section vi Summary

This section will contain a summary of the findings of the review. It will be written for a broad lay audience and will be readable as a stand-alone document. The summary will reflect accurately the contents of the full report, and it will not be necessary to read the main body of the report in order to understand the recommendations.

The summary will begin with a general comment on the extent to which the institution's strategy for assuring the quality of its academic provision, and the measures it has promoted to give effect to that strategy, enable it, now and in the future, to manage effectively its responsibilities for quality and standards. In doing so it will highlight any factors that are influencing, or are likely in future to influence, the institution's capacity to act more (or less) capably in this area, together with any other special circumstances of which the reader may need to be aware. It will also offer a judgement on the reliability of the institution's self-

evaluation and how far this accurately reflects the institution's level of self-knowledge and ability to reflect critically on its academic responsibilities.

The second part will offer a judgement on the institution as an awarding body. It will comment on the extent to which the institution is fully aware of its responsibilities for maintaining its academic standards and is adequately in control of the academic standards of all of its awards, including those delivered through collaborative partnerships. Regard will be had to evidence from subject reviews of the way in which the institution uses the reference points provided by subject benchmark statements and the qualifications framework. A view will be expressed on the security of the institution's internal regulatory system and procedures for its awards.

The third part will provide a brief summary commentary on the institution's adherence to the *Code of practice*, highlighting any major causes for concern or areas where more detailed review would be advisable.

The final part will provide a brief overall summing-up of the report. It will include a statement of the general level of confidence that the Agency has in the institution as an effective organisation able to discharge its academic obligations as a responsible higher education institution and qualifications awarding body. This statement may include references to instances of exemplary practice or to particular areas where there is not (or cannot be, because of the absence of adequate evidence) confidence in the institution's policies and practices. More information about the nature of this statement is contained in Part 2, paragraphs 123 to 126.

[Target: 1,000 words]

Section vii Action points and exemplary features

This section will include a list of points which the review team considers require further attention by the institution. These will be categorised according to their importance and urgency into three groups:

- essential matters which the team believes are currently putting academic standards and/or quality at risk, and which require urgent corrective action;
- advisable matters which the team believes have the potential to put academic standards and/or quality at risk and which require either preventive, or less urgent corrective, action;
- desirable matters which the team believes have the potential to enhance quality and/or further secure academic standards.

This section will also include reference to any exemplary features noted by the review team (see Part 2, paragraph 127). *[No target, but unlikely to be more than 300 words]*

Annex E - Aide-memoire for subject review

Introduction

1 This aide-mémoire consists of questions and prompts to assist academic reviewers. It may be used in:

- analysis of the self-evaluation prior to the review;
- collection of evidence during the review;
- preparation and compilation of the report of the review.

2 The *aide-mémoire* covers the main features of the review process, but it is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. The provider's self-evaluation, the statement of aims, and the intended outcomes of programmes may all raise issues peculiar to the provision under scrutiny.

3 Specific prompts for reviewers are set out under a series of headings. The process of review focuses on the setting of academic standards by the subject provider, their achievement by students, and the quality of the learning opportunities offered. Neither 'standards' nor 'quality' can be reviewed in isolation. They are inter-related and must be reviewed as such. The *aide-mémoire* provides questions and prompts about:

- aims and outcomes;
- curricula;
- assessment;
- enhancement;
- teaching and learning;
- student progression;
- learning resources.

4 The aide-mémoire should be read in conjunction with paragraphs 68 to 95 of the Handbook.

Subject review of standards and quality

5 The subject review process:

- accommodates a wide diversity of institutional mission and approaches to subjects;
- reflects the core academic processes of design, delivery, support, assessment and review of programmes
 of study;
- articulates with an institution's internal processes for the regulation of academic quality and standards.

6 Key points of reference for reviewers will include the relevant sections of the Code of practice, the qualifications framework, relevant subject benchmark statements, and the overall aims of the subject provider. Regard should also be had to the requirements of professional and statutory bodies in respect of programmes that they accredit.

7 The aide-mémoire is divided into seven sections (i-vii) that help to set the parameters for the review as a whole. Each section comprises:

- a set of questions, to gather information;
- the key issues for evaluation;
- an indication of likely sources of information;

- an indication of the types of activity likely to be undertaken during a review;
- the judgements that should be made.

Section i Aims and outcomes

Evaluation of the intended learning outcomes in relation to external reference points and to the broad aims of the provision

8 Reviewers should ask:

- What are the intended learning outcomes for a programme?
- How do they relate to external reference points including relevant subject benchmark statements, the qualifications framework and any professional body requirements?
- How do they relate to the overall aims of the provision as stated by the subject provider?
- Are they appropriate to the aims?

They should then evaluate the intended learning outcomes against relevant external reference points and against the aims of the provision as described in the self-evaluation.

Potential sources of information will include the self-evaluation (and its appended programme specifications), curricular documents, subject benchmark statements, and details of professional body requirements. Review activities may include an analysis of programme content and benchmark statements, discussions with members of the teaching staff, and discussions with external examiners.

9 As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to judge:

- whether the intended learning outcomes are clearly stated;
- whether they reflect appropriately relevant benchmark statements, other external references, and the
 overall aims of the provision.

The means by which the subject provider designs curricula that permit achievement of the intended outcomes

10 Reviewers should ask:

- How does the provider ensure that curriculum content enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes?
- How does the provider ensure that the design and organisation of the curriculum is effective in promoting student learning and achievement of the intended learning outcomes?

They should then evaluate the effectiveness of the way in which the subject provider plans, designs and approves the curricula.

Sources of information will include institutional curricular documents and curricular review and validation reports. Reviewers should seek to extract information about levels and modes of study, breadth and depth of study, interand multi-disciplinarity, coherence, flexibility and student choice, as well as the role of professional and/or statutory bodies where relevant.

Review activities will include discussions with members of the teaching teams, support staff and administrative staff, and discussions with students.

The section of the Code of practice dealing with programme approval, monitoring and review will provide an important point of reference, as will the section on Recement learning.

11 As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to judge the adequacy of procedures for ensuring that programmes are designed to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The means by which the intended outcomes are communicated to students, staff and external examiners

12 Reviewers should ask:

- How are the intended outcomes of a programme and its constituent parts communicated to staff, students
 and external examiners?
- Do the students know what is expected of them?

They should then evaluate the way in which subject providers convey their expectations to staff, students and external examiners.

Sources of information will include programme or subject handbooks and curricular documents such as module or unit quides.

Review activities will include discussions with teaching teams, students and external examiners.

The main outcomes should be judgements on the adequacy of arrangements within the subject for communicating intended learning outcomes.

Section ii Curricula

Evaluation of the means by which the subject provider creates the conditions for achievement of the intended learning outcomes

13 Reviewers should ask:

 Do the design and content of the curricula encourage achievement of the intended learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and understanding, cognitive skills, subject specific skills (including practical/professional skills), transferable skills, progression to employment and/or further study, and personal development?

They should then evaluate the design and content of the curriculum for each programme in relation to its potential for enabling students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Sources of information will include subject or programme handbooks and curricular documents, such as module or unit guides, practical or placement handbooks, and further study and employment statistics. Review activities will include evaluation of curricular documents and discussions with staff and students.

As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to judge whether the intended learning outcomes are adequately supported by the curricula.

14 Reviewers should ask:

 Is there evidence that curricular content and design is informed by recent developments in techniques of teaching and learning, by current research and scholarship, and by any changes in relevant occupational or professional requirements?

They should then evaluate whether the curriculum is adequately informed by such developments. Sources of information will include subject or programme handbooks, validation or re-validation documents, and professional and/or statutory body accreditation reports.

Review activities will include discussions with staff and external examiners, discussions with professional and/or statutory bodies, and discussions with employers (where relevant and possible).

As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to assess the currency of the curricula.

Section iii Assessment

Evaluation of the assessment process and the standard it demonstrates

15 Reviewers should ask:

- Does the assessment process enable learners to demonstrate achievement of the intended outcomes?
- Are there criteria that enable internal and external examiners to distinguish between different categories of achievement?
- Can there be full confidence in the security and integrity of assessment procedures?
- Does the assessment strategy have an adequate formative function in developing student abilities?

They should then evaluate whether the overall assessment process and the particular assessment instruments chosen are appropriate and effective.

Sources of information will include assessment criteria and guidance to markers, external examiners' reports and procedures for monitoring and recording achievement.

Review activities will include discussions with teaching teams, students and external examiners and the analysis of the methods for recording progress and achievement.

The sections of the Code of practice dealing with assessment of students and external examining will be important points of reference.

As a result of these activities, reviewers should be able to judge whether assessment processes can adequately measure achievement of the intended programme outcomes.

16 Reviewers should ask:

 What evidence is there that the standards achieved by learners meet the minimum expectations for the award, as measured against relevant subject benchmarks and the qualifications framework?

They should then evaluate whether student achievement meets such expectations. Sources of information will include external examiners' reports, examination board minutes, and samples of student work.

Review activities will include discussions with teaching teams and external examiners, and observation of examination boards where possible.

Relevant subject benchmark statements and the level descriptors of the qualifications framework will be important points of reference.

As a result of these activities, reviewers should be able to judge whether appropriate standards are being achieved.

a and any state of the second s

Section iv Enhancement

Evaluation of the institution's approaches to reviewing and improving the standards achieved

17 Reviewers should ask:

- How does the subject provider review and seek to enhance standards?
- They should then evaluate the adequacy of the processes used.

Sources of information will include internal and external review documents, external examiners' reports,

professional and/or statutory body accreditation reports, and examination board minutes.

Review activities will include analyses of information, practices and procedures, discussions with teaching teams and discussions with external examiners.

As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to assess the capacity of the subject provider to review and calibrate their standards, and to promote enhancement.

Section v Teaching and learning

Evaluation of the quality of the learning opportunities offered by the subject provider: the teaching delivered by staff and how it leads to learning by students

18 Reviewers should ask:

- How effective is teaching in relation to curriculum content and programme aims?
- How effectively do staff draw upon their research, scholarship or professional activity to inform their teaching?
- How good are the materials provided to support learning?
- Is there effective engagement with and participation by students?
- Is the quality of teaching maintained and enhanced through effective staff development, peer review of teaching, integration of part-time and visiting staff, effective team teaching and induction and mentoring of new staff?
- Are there adequate numbers of eperopriately qualified staff?
- Do the partnership arrangements provide adequate numbers of placement opportunities to support students learning?
- How effectively is learning facilitated in terms of student workloads?

They should then evaluate the overall effectiveness of the teaching and learning activities; in particular:

- the breadth, depth, pace and challenge of teaching;
- whether there is suitable variety of teaching methods;
- the effectiveness of the teaching of subject knowledge; and
- the effectiveness of the teaching of subject specific, transferable and practical skills.

Sources of information will include student questionnaires, internal review documents, staff development documents, subject or programme handbooks, and academic staff appointment documents. Review activities will include direct observation of teaching (where judged to be necessary by reviewers), discussions with staff, and discussions with students.

As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to make an overall judgement of the extent to which teaching and learning contributes to the achievement of the intended outcomes.

Section vi Student progression

Evaluation of the quality of the learning opportunities offered by the subject provider: student progression and academic support

19 Reviewers should ask:

- Is there an appropriate overall strategy for academic support, including written guidance, which is
 consistent with the student profile and the overall aims of the provision?
- Are there effective arrangements for admission and induction which are generally understood by staff and applicants?
- How effectively is learning facilitated by academic guidance, feedback and supervisory arrangements?
- --- Are the arrangements for academic tutorial support clear and generally understood by staff and students?

They should then evaluate whether the arrangements in place are effective in facilitating student progression towards successful completion of their programmes.

Sources of information will include subject or programme handbooks, student questionnaires, internal review documents, recruitment data, and progression data.

Review activities will include discussions with admissions staff, discussions with teaching staff, and discussions with students.

As a result of these activities, reviewers should be able to judge the effectiveness of the recruitment arrangements, the strategy for student support and the progression of students.

Section vii Learning resources

Evaluation of the quality of the learning opportunities offered by the subject provider: learning resources and their deployment

20 Reviewers should ask:

- Is the collective expertise of the academic and placement staff suitable and available for effective delivery
 of the curricula, for the overall teaching, learning and assessment strategy, and for the achievement of the
 intended learning outcomes?
- Are appropriate staff development opportunities available?
- Is appropriate technical and administrative support available?

They should then evaluate the effectiveness of the deployment of academic and support staff in support of the intended learning outcomes.

Sources of information will include staff CVs, internal review documents, external examiners' reports, and staff development documents.

Review activities may include direct observation of teaching (where carried out), discussions with teaching teams, and discussions with students. See Annex N

As a result of these activities reviewers should be able to judge whether there are appropriately qualified staff who are contributing effectively to achievement of the intended outcomes.

21 Reviewers should ask:

- Is there an overall strategy for the deployment of learning resources?
- How effectively is learning facilitated in terms of the provision of resources?
- Is suitable teaching and learning accommodation available?
- Are the subject book and periodical stocks appropriate and accessible?
- Are suitable equipment and appropriate IT facilities available to learners?

They should then evaluate the appropriateness of the learning resources available, and the effectiveness of their deployment.

Sources of information will include equipment lists, library stocks, and internal review documents. Review activities will include direct observation of accommodation and equipment, discussions with staff, and discussions with students.

As a result of these activities, reviewers should be able to judge how effectively the learning resources are deployed in support of the intended outcomes.

Section vili Focus on practice

22 Review teams will pay particular attention during the reviews to the effectiveness of the programmes in preparing students for practice. Practice-based learning can be arranged in different ways, and institutions will wish to explain and evaluate the effectiveness of their approaches in their self-evaluation documents. An *aide-memoire* to be used by reviewers as they consider the effectiveness of the particular approaches is set out below. The *aide-memoire* will also provide a structure to be used by review teams as they address practice-based learning in their reports.

23 The aide-memoire draws upon both the section of the QAA's Code of practice on placement learning and the joint ENB/Department of Health publication, *Placement in Focus*. These documents are available to all members of review teams and provide a useful guide to the issues that need to be considered during the review.

Aide-memoire for the review of practice-based learning

Section i Providing practice-based learning opportunities

24 Review teams will ask:

Are there appropriate opportunities available to students to experience and learn within a practice environment? Are these opportunities managed effectively?

Reviewers will seek evidence of, for example:

- Effective partnership arrangements between the institution and any placement providers.
- Clear and appropriate allocation of responsibilities between the partners for securing and managing placement
 opportunities.
- The allocation of appropriate resources to support practice-based learning opportunities, and commitment, at the highest level, to providing and maintaining those opportunities.
- A multi-professional approach to providing and supporting practice-based learning.
- Regular monitoring and review of the effectiveness of practice-based learning opportunities and arrangements.

Section li Suitability of the learning environments

25 Review teams will ask:

Are the environments in which practice-based learning occurs conducive to effective learning?

Review teams will seek evidence of, for example:

Carefully selected, developed and varied learning environments.

- Appropriate learning opportunities and supportive learning cultures.
- Opportunities to experience multi-professional approaches to care.
- Health and safety considerations.

Section iii Student and staff support

26 Review teams will ask:

Are students effectively prepared for, and supported during, practice-based learning? Are staff able to provide the necessary support to students?

Review teams will seek evidence of, for example:

- Clear information about practice-based learning, including: allocation and timing of learning opportunities; the aims and intended learning outcomes; assessment arrangements; arrangements for reporting concerns and raising complaints.
- Appropriate guidance before, during and after any placements, to secure safe and ethical practice and effective learning and reflection.
- Consistent and appropriate supervision by staff who are competent to undertake their roles and who are developed and encouraged to support learning by students.
- Understanding by students and staff of their respective responsibilities.

Section iv Assessment of learning outcomes

27 Review teams will ask:

Are the intended learning outcomes for practice-based learning assessed appropriately and as part of a coherent assessment strategy?

Review teams will seek evidence of, for example:

- Clear guidance about the assessment arrangements, including: the contribution of assessment of practice learning to the final award and the responsibilities of the parties involved.
- Assessment tools that are appropriate for the learning outcomes being assessed.
- An assessment strategy that reflects progression, integration and coherence.
- The competence of those involved with the assessment arrangements.