

Office for
Students



Post-registration quality and standards assessment report for Anglo Skills College

Provider legal name: Anglo Skills College Limited

Provider trading name: Anglo Skills College

UKPRN: 10030497

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Enquiries to regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk

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Executive summary

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|---------------------------|--|
| Type of assessment | Post-registration quality and standards assessment |
| For | Anglo Skills College |
| Advice to the OfS | The provider is likely to be compliant with conditions B1, B2 and B4 at present. The provider is likely to be at risk of non-compliance with condition B2.2.a in future, which may additionally lead to a risk of non-compliance with condition B1. Condition B5 was not within scope for this assessment. |

The Office for Students (OfS) has the power to apply a specific ongoing condition of registration to a registered provider. The OfS applies such conditions when it considers that doing so will mitigate the risk of a future breach of general ongoing conditions at the provider.

Where risks are identified during registration related to quality and standards conditions B1, B2, B4 or B5, the OfS may apply a specific ongoing condition which provides for a quality and standards assessment to take place at a time after the provider's registration with the OfS. In line with the OfS's risk-based approach, the assessment is focused on the risks identified and whether the provider has responded appropriately to concerns raised during registration.

As part of such assessments, the OfS appoints an assessment team, including external academic experts, to consider evidence and carry out a visit to the provider, after which it produces a report. The report does not take into account matters which may have occurred subsequent to that period.

1. This report is an independent assessment of Anglo Skills College's ('the College') compliance with the Office for Students' (OfS) ongoing conditions of registration for quality and standards: conditions B1, B2, B4 and B5.
2. The report shows the findings of an independent assessment team. **It does not represent a decision by the OfS about the provider's compliance with these conditions of registration.**
3. The Office for Students (OfS) requires all registered higher education providers' courses to meet a minimum set of requirements or conditions that relate to quality and standards. These detailed requirements can be found in the OfS's regulatory framework.¹
4. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) identified concerns about Anglo Skills College when it conducted a quality and standards review (QSR) in December 2021,

¹ See OfS, [Regulatory framework for higher education in England - Office for Students](#).

prior to its registration with the OfS.² The concerns are also detailed in the OfS regulatory case report for Anglo Skills College from July 2023.³

5. Anglo Skills College currently offers a Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Business and a Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Business. It intends to start delivering a Level 4 Higher National Certificate in Computing and Level 5 Higher National Diploma in Computing in May 2025.
6. The OfS appointed an assessment team in June 2024, which consisted of two academic expert assessors and a member of OfS staff. The OfS asked the team to consider evidence and advise the OfS on the College's quality and standards, in relation to the concerns raised by the QAA in the QSR. The team mapped the concerns raised by the QAA onto OfS conditions of registration to produce lines of enquiry to guide the assessment and facilitate consideration of Anglo Skills College's compliance with OfS conditions B1, B2, B4 and B5. The full text of these conditions is available at Annex B.
7. The team reviewed a range of information submitted by Anglo Skills College, including a narrative explanation of how the College had responded to the concerns raised in the QSR and accompanying evidence for the response set out in the narrative document.
8. The team visited the College in October 2024 to meet with management, teaching and administrative staff and a group of students. The team had a tour of the College's site and had access to the College's virtual learning environment (VLE).
9. After considering each of the lines of enquiry established, based on the information it considered, the assessment team's view is as follows:

Condition B1

The College is currently delivering a high quality academic experience and is likely to be compliant with condition B1 at present. The College's course handbooks, module descriptors, online resources, and materials used for teaching demonstrated the College's capacity to ensure that each higher education course is up to date, educationally challenging, coherent, effectively delivered, and requires students to develop relevant skills.

There is a likely risk of non-compliance with condition B2, noted below, which has implications for the College's ongoing compliance with condition B1. This is connected to the College's ability to recruit and manage a larger staff team in line with student number growth. If the College can grow its staff team appropriately, the College will likely remain compliant with condition B1. However, should the College fail to recruit sufficient staff or manage staff performance effectively, it may adversely affect the College's capacity to deliver a high quality academic experience as required by condition B1.

² See QAA, 'Quality and standards review for providers applying to register with the Office for Students: 'Anglo Skills College', available at [Assessment Reports - DQB England](#).

³ See OfS, [Regulatory case report for Anglo Skills College Limited – specific ongoing condition BA - Office for Students](#).

Condition B2

The College is likely to be at risk of non-compliance with condition B2.2.a. This condition requires that a provider maintains a staff team that is sufficient in number, appropriately qualified and deployed effectively to deliver a high quality academic experience in practice.

The College's staff team is, at present, sufficient in number and appropriately qualified. However, the College intends to grow its student numbers and the assessment team identifies a risk related to the College's capacity to increase and manage its staff team as it increases its student numbers. This is because:

- The College is vulnerable to single points of failure in its staffing model and was unable to articulate a structured method for managing short-term loss of staff resource.
- The College's track record of staff recruitment has included difficulties in recruiting a Computing lead, which has led to delaying the start of its planned Computing courses on more than one occasion. The College was unable to articulate how it would change its recruitment approach to ensure it could hire required staff within reasonable timescales in future.
- The College's approach to performance management for its teaching team is informal. It has formal policies in place but was unable to demonstrate its capacity to carry these out in practice. As the College intends to recruit several new teaching staff, issues with performance management leads to a risk that low quality teaching is not identified and resolved.

In relation to other areas under condition B2, the College has expanded its physical and digital resources to meet its current and future needs so is likely to be compliant with the requirement under condition B2 that a provider offers physical and digital learning resources that are adequate and deployed effectively to meet the needs of each cohort of students.

The College has also developed its approach to student feedback and complaints. It is likely compliant with the requirement under condition B2 to provide effective engagement with each cohort of students.

Condition B4

The College has demonstrated that its assessment practices are robust and lead to effective assessments that are valid and reliable, and awards that are credible. Examples of assignments and students' marked work evidenced high quality assessment practices.

The College's academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language, in particular through a clear policy for testing English language at admissions and evidence of testing through on-course assessments. The College is therefore likely to be compliant with condition B4.2.d.

There is evidence that the College does not follow its admissions policy effectively as, on more than one occasion, it stated that it used a particular English language test at admissions, which the assessment team identified does not meet the College's own requirements in its admissions policy. This is unlikely to indicate non-compliance with condition B4.2.d, as this condition is focused specifically on the design of academic regulations. However, the assessment advises that the provider ought to follow its own admissions policy more effectively.

10. There were no concerns raised in the QSR relating to condition B5.
11. This report does not represent any decision of the OfS in respect of whether the College satisfies the initial conditions of registration.

Introduction and background

12. At the time that Anglo Skills College Limited ('the College') applied for registration with the OfS, the initial and ongoing quality and standards conditions in effect were those set out in the 2018 regulatory framework. The OfS commissioned the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), as the designated quality body, to carry out quality and standards reviews (QSRs) at providers seeking registration. The review conducted in 2021 assessed the College against the core practices in the 2018 version of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education ('the Quality Code').⁴
13. In its report on Anglo Skills College Limited, the QAA identified concerns in relation to some of the core practices. The OfS decided that the College complied with initial conditions B1, B2, B4 and B5, and registered the College. However, the concerns set out in the QAA report led the OfS to impose a specific condition of registration on the College, to mitigate risks in relation to its compliance with ongoing conditions of registration. The specific condition required a quality and standards assessment of the College to take place after registration, to assess whether it had resolved the concerns.⁵
14. In May 2022, the new and revised ongoing conditions of registration B1, B2, B4 and B5 came into effect in a revised version of the regulatory framework. The revised conditions set out the requirements relating to quality and standards that are now in force for registered providers.⁶
15. Therefore, the OfS directed a quality and standards assessment team to consider, with reference to the concerns raised in the QSR report, whether there are any concerns regarding compliance with the current conditions of registration B1, B2, B4 and B5.
16. The assessment team mapped the findings set out in the QSR where core practices were not met to the current conditions of registration. This allowed the team to form initial lines of enquiry as it gathered evidence, to provide advice to the OfS on Anglo Skills College's compliance with the OfS's ongoing conditions of registration relating to quality and standards.

Provider context

17. Anglo Skills College is a small provider based in Nottingham. The College was founded in 2010, principally offering non-higher education English language courses. It received centre approval from Pearson in 2012 and started delivering Pearson higher national certificates and higher national diplomas 2014. It registered with the OfS in 2023.
18. It operates from a single site in Nottingham city centre. The site includes four classrooms, two computer suites also used as teaching spaces, and additional rooms for administration and social and study spaces for students.
19. The College currently offers the following courses at Levels 4 and 5 in Business:

⁴ Available at: QAA, [UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2018](#).

⁵ The full text of the specific ongoing condition is available at [Regulatory case report for Anglo Skills College Limited – specific ongoing condition BA - Office for Students](#), published in July 2023.

⁶ Available at [Regulatory framework for higher education in England - Office for Students](#).

- a. Pearson BTEC Level 4 Higher National Certificate (HNC) in Business
 - b. Pearson BTEC Level 5 Higher National Diploma (HND) in Business.
20. The College intends to deliver the following Computing courses at Levels 4 and 5 from May 2025:
- a. Pearson BTEC Level 4 HNC in Computing for England
 - b. Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND in Computing for England.
21. The College also holds approval from the relevant awarding bodies to offer the following courses, but has stated that it does not intend to run these courses:
- a. Pearson BTEC Level 4 HNC in Social and Community Work
 - b. Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND in Social and Community Work
 - c. Pearson BTEC Level 7 Certificate, Diploma and Extended Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership
- These courses are advertised on the College's website. It stated that it does not intend to proactively recruit to these courses, but would consider if it was feasible to offer the course should a student or group of students enquire about taking the course.
- d. ABE Level 4 Diploma in Business Management
 - e. ABE Level 5 Diploma in Business Management
 - f. ABE Level 6 Diploma in Business Management.
22. The College has three student intakes each year: September, January and May. It had a total of 44 students in the 2023-24 academic year, split between the intakes as follows:
- a. September 2023 – seven students
 - b. January 2024 – 17 students
 - c. May 2024 – 20 students.
23. The College intends to grow its student numbers gradually, from a total of 44 students in the 2023-24 academic year to 259 students in the 2026-27 academic year. From the 2027-28 academic year onwards, student numbers are intended to stabilise at around 260 students. To achieve the planned growth, the College intends to: have larger intakes on Business courses; start Computing courses; and support progression of students from Level 4 HNC courses to Level 5 HND courses.
24. Table 1 details planned student numbers on the College's courses, broken down into planned student cohorts.

Table 1: Planned student numbers for the 2024-25 to 2026-27 academic years, broken down by planned student cohorts

| Course | 2024-25 academic year | | 2025-26 academic year | | 2026-27 academic year | |
|---|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|
| | | | | | | |
| Pearson BTEC Level 4 HNC in Business | September 2024 | 45 | September 2025 | 40 | September 2026 | 50 |
| | January 2025 | 25 | January 2026 | 30 | January 2027 | 30 |
| | May 2025 | 25 | May 2026 | 30 | May 2027 | 30 |
| | Total | 95 | Total | 100 | Total | 110 |
| Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND in Business | September 2024 | 17 | September 2025 | 42 | September 2026 | 37 |
| | January 2025 | 14 | January 2026 | 23 | January 2027 | 27 |
| | May 2025 | 20 | May 2026 | 23 | May 2027 | 27 |
| | Total | 51 | Total | 88 | Total | 91 |
| Pearson BTEC Level 4 HNC in Computing for England | September 2024 | 0 | September 2025 | 15 | September 2026 | 15 |
| | January 2025 | 0 | January 2026 | 15 | January 2027 | 15 |
| | May 2025 | 15 | May 2026 | 0 | May 2027 | 0 |
| | Total | 15 | Total | 30 | Total | 30 |
| Pearson BTEC Level 5 HND in Computing for England | September 2024 | - | September 2025 | 0 | September 2026 | 14 |
| | January 2025 | - | January 2026 | 0 | January 2027 | 14 |
| | May 2025 | - | May 2026 | 14 | May 2027 | 0 |
| | Total | - | Total | 14 | Total | 28 |
| Total students, all courses | 161 | | 232 | | 259 | |

25. The College's student population contains a high proportion of mature students. The College reported that all current students are eligible for Students Loans Company funding, and therefore are UK nationals, Irish citizens, or have 'settled status' in the UK. Several students speak English as a second language.

26. The College's staff team, as of October 2024, was as follows:

- Management team:
 - Principal
 - Director of Quality (employed at 0.4 full-time equivalent (FTE))
 - Trainee Academic Manager
 - Student Support Manager
 - IT Manager (employed at 0.4 FTE).

The Academic Manager also has responsibilities for teaching on Business courses.

- Four Business Tutors:
 - one tutor employed at 0.8 FTE
 - three sessional tutors contracted for 16 hours per week.

- Administrative staff:
 - Office Administrator
 - IT Support Administrator
 - Student Support Assistant
 - Student Advisor.

27. The College told the OfS that it is recruiting for a Course Coordinator for the Computing courses it intends to offer, and for a Registrar to work on quality processes and assurance.

Assessment process

28. The assessment team considered the issues raised by the QAA in the QSR carried out as part of the College's registration with the OfS. It mapped these concerns to current OfS conditions to identify lines of enquiry (see the following section 'Analysis of the QSR' for mapping). The lines of enquiry provided the principal focus for the assessment, but the assessment team could assess wider areas related to conditions B1, B2, B4 and B5 if it considered this necessary to the assessment.
29. As part of the College's specific condition applied at registration, it was required to submit a written commentary with accompanying evidence, outlining its response to the concerns raised in the QSR carried out at registration. The commentary was originally submitted to the OfS in October 2023.
30. Following the commencement of this assessment, the assessment team invited the College to provide an updated version of the written commentary and accompanying evidence. The updated commentary and evidence were used as the initial evidence for this assessment. The commentary included, for each concern raised in the QSR, the College's explanation of steps it had taken and proposed to take in response, as well as the proposed timeline and resources for its response.
31. After considering the initial evidence, the assessment team requested additional evidence from the College for the assessment, which it received on 23 September 2024.
32. The assessment team had access to the College's virtual learning environment (VLE) from 24 September 2024 onwards. This allowed the team to review the resources for students on the VLE.
33. The team visited the College on 8 and 9 October 2024. During the visit, the assessment team met with the College's management team, teaching and administrative staff, and a group of students. The visit allowed the team to discuss the College's approach to quality and standards with staff and students and hear an account of how the College had responded to the QSR, and how policies and processes seen in the written evidence were carried out in practice.
34. The team used the written submission, accompanying written evidence, the VLE and information gathered during the site visit to form a view on the lines of enquiry, as set out in the following section. Informed by this, the team advised the OfS, in the remainder of this report, on the College's compliance with conditions of registration B1, B2 and B4.

Analysis of the QSR

The team undertook an analysis of the QSR report to identify relevant lines of enquiry.

35. The assessment team's analysis of the QSR identified an overarching concern related to the College's capacity to deliver a high quality academic experience as it expanded its student numbers. The College was deemed to have 'not met' four core practices in the QSR. The assessment team explored four specific areas which led to the College not meeting these four core practices, while considering throughout, the overarching question of whether the College can maintain academic quality during a period of growth and on an ongoing basis.
36. The specific areas of concern raised in the QSR related to:
 - a. The College's provision of transparent information to prospective students regarding the resources available to them should they attend the College.
 - b. The College's approach to recruiting, inducting, developing, appraising and retaining appropriately qualified staff.
 - c. The College's strategy for developing its resources to maintain quality if it grows its student numbers.
 - d. The College's complaints procedure.
37. The assessment team, using the concerns raised in the QSR, identified that its assessment needed to explore the College's compliance with OfS conditions B1, B2 and B4. The assessment team considered that the concerns raised in the QSR did not relate to condition B5. It set five lines of enquiry to facilitate its assessment of compliance with OfS conditions.
38. The lines of enquiry established for the assessment were:

Line of enquiry 1: The capacity of the College to maintain a high quality academic experience, at present and into the future, in light of its planned growth in student numbers, teaching and administrative staff numbers, and physical teaching and learning spaces.

39. This line of enquiry is connected to:
 - a. B1.3.a, as it requires the College to ensure each higher education course is **up to date**.
 - b. B1.3.b, as it requires the College to ensure each higher education course provides **educational challenge**.
 - c. B1.3.c, as it requires the College to ensure each higher education course is **coherent**.
 - d. B1.3.d, as it requires the College to ensure each higher education course is **effectively delivered**.

- e. B1.3.e, as it requires the College to ensure each higher education course, as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop **relevant skills**.

Line of enquiry 2: The provision of sufficient physical and digital resources to ensure a high quality academic experience, at present and into the future, in light of planned growth in student numbers, teaching and administrative staff numbers.

- 40. This line of enquiry is connected to B2.2.a, as it requires the College to take all reasonable steps to ensure each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives **resources** which are sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students, and those students succeed in and beyond higher education.
- 41. Provision of resources includes **physical and digital learning resources** that are adequate and deployed effectively to meet the needs of the cohort of students.

Line of enquiry 3: The provision of a staff team that is sufficient in number and appropriately qualified to deliver a high quality academic experience, including student academic support, at present and into the future, in light of planned growth in student numbers.

- 42. This line of enquiry is connected to B2.2.a, as it requires the College to take all reasonable steps to ensure each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives **resources** and **support** which are sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students, and those students succeed in and beyond higher education.
- 43. Provision of resources includes the staff team that designs and delivers a higher education course being collectively **sufficient in number, appropriately qualified** and deployed effectively to deliver in practice.
- 44. Provision of support means the effective deployment of assistance, as appropriate to the content of the higher education course and the cohort of students, including:
 - a. academic support relating to the content of the higher education course;
 - b. support needed to underpin successful physical and digital learning and teaching;
 - c. support relating to understanding, avoiding and reporting academic misconduct;
 - d. careers support.

Line of enquiry 4: Provision of routes for students to provide feedback and raise complaints or appeals in relation to their academic experience.

- 45. This line of enquiry is connected to B2.2.b, as it requires the College to take all reasonable steps to ensure effective **engagement** with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the

purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students, and those students succeed in and beyond higher education.

46. Engagement means routine provision of opportunities for students to contribute to the development of their academic experience and their higher education course.

Line of enquiry 5: The capacity of the College to ensure effective assessments that are valid, reliable and lead to credible awards, at present and into the future, in light of its planned growth in student numbers.

47. This line of enquiry is connected to:

- a. B4.2.a, as it requires the College to ensure that students are **assessed effectively**.
- b. B4.2.b, as it requires the College to ensure that each assessment is **valid** and **reliable**.
- c. B4.2.c, as it requires the College to ensure that **academic regulations** are designed to ensure that relevant awards are **credible**.
- d. B4.2.d, as it requires the College to ensure that **academic regulations** are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable higher education course.

48. The full detail of the analysis of the QSR, and how its findings link to the lines of enquiry and relate to the B conditions, is shown in Annex A.

Assessment of matters relating to quality under ongoing conditions of registration B1, B2 and B4

Condition B1

49. The documents provided by the College and principally reviewed by the team in relation to condition B1 included:

- Resources strategy
- Student handbooks for Business and Computing courses
- Reports from the College's awarding body
- Unit descriptors for five units on Business courses
- Summary of a student feedback survey
- Staff appraisal and teaching observation policies
- Student complaints log.

50. During the site visit, the team met:

- The College's management team, including the Principal, Director of Quality, Academic Manager, Student Support Manager and IT Manager
- The College's four Business Tutors
- Members of the College's administrative and support staff
- 13 students studying at both Levels 4 and 5.

51. The assessment team reviewed the College's VLE, including the resources made available to students through the VLE. The team also had a tour of the College's site to view the physical teaching spaces and resources available to students on-site.

52. The team assessed multiple relevant sources of information, as identified above. Following a risk-based approach, the team considered the line of enquiry set out below.

Line of enquiry 1

The capacity of the College to maintain a high quality academic experience, at present and into the future, in light of planned growth in student numbers, teaching and administrative staff numbers, and physical teaching and learning spaces.

53. The QSR stated that the College did not have adequate staff training and development opportunities, and did not have adequate processes for the recruitment, induction, appraisal, and retention of an appropriately qualified and consistent staff team. The QSR also noted that

the College did not have a strategy for the development of learning resources for its planned student number growth.

54. The findings related to staff training and development, and having an appropriately qualified and consistent staff team, relate to OfS condition B1 which requires that a provider ensures that each higher education course is up to date, provides educational challenge, is coherent, is effectively delivered and, as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills. This is because, in the assessment team's view, if a provider's staff are not appropriately qualified and supported to continuously develop, a provider may risk not meeting these regulatory requirements.
55. The findings related to the absence of a strategy or plan for developing learning resources are relevant to OfS conditions B1.3.a and B1.3.d, which require a provider to ensure that each higher education course is up to date and effectively delivered. In the assessment team's view, if learning resources are not appropriately maintained, a provider may risk not meeting these regulatory requirements, because it may not be able to effectively deliver education ensuring an appropriate balance of delivery methods and an appropriate balance between independent and directed study.
56. The College's ability to maintain – through recruitment, appraisal and training – a staff team that is sufficient in number and appropriately qualified to deliver a high quality academic experience is discussed fully under line of enquiry 3. This is because provision of resources aligns with condition B2.2.a and needs to be considered with reference to that condition. However, because the QSR raised an issue with the sufficiency of the College's staffing, the assessment team considered it appropriate to assess whether the College currently provides, and can continue to provide, a high quality academic experience with reference to condition B1.
57. This line of enquiry therefore focused on considering the quality of the academic experience provided by the College. The assessment team considered how the College ensures that each higher education course remains up to date, and how it plans and teaches its courses. The team reviewed how staff use a mixture of resources developed either by its awarding body or by the College itself, to deliver teaching and learning opportunities. The team also sought the views of students on their academic experience at the College.

Up-to-date courses

58. The College's courses are provided with an awarding body. The awarding body provides learning outcomes, unit descriptors, assignment brief templates or guidance, and the primary textbooks, resources, and journal articles relevant to the courses. The College is responsible for how it chooses to deliver day-to-day teaching. The College teaches students, then designs and delivers assessments based on the awarding body's templates and guidance.
59. The awarding body routinely updates the content of its courses to reflect developments in the field. By working in partnership with the awarding body, the College can keep its courses up to date. The awarding body carries out an annual validation process each year, which includes an academic management review and validation processes related to assessment. The College told the assessment team that it has passed all validation processes since becoming a delivery partner in 2012. The awarding body's validation reports from the 2023-24 academic

year provide positive commentary about the College's academic practices and compliance with the awarding body's requirements.

60. Teaching staff told the assessment team that they do not receive direct contact from the awarding body when changes are made to courses, so the College needs to pro-actively check the awarding body's website to identify course updates. They stated that this means it can be tricky to identify updates in as timely a way as the College would like.
61. It is the assessment team's view that the content of the College's current Business courses is up to date and in line with developments in the field. Assignment briefs indicate that assessment tasks are relevant to contemporary issues in the field and use up-to-date case studies. This is further supported by module descriptors, which set out key concepts reflective of developments in the field appropriate to the level of study, and align with the awarding body's learning outcomes and core academic texts. Teaching resources on the VLE also include helpful contemporary case studies.
62. Teaching staff stated that course preparation, including developing and updating teaching materials, often takes place outside their salaried hours. The staff interviewed spoke of how they were willing to work hard for the College because they firmly believed in the College's mission to provide education to students who might not otherwise be able to access it. As the College grows, it may not be able to rely on goodwill to the same extent. However, the College's development plan and statements in meetings note its intention to recruit additional full-time teaching staff and increase the hours of sessional staff – this would provide additional resource for developing and updating teaching resources.
63. The College has developed its library of online texts to ensure that students have access to appropriate and up-to-date resources for their learning. It subscribes to a large repository of online textbooks, texts and journals and has access to the awarding body's repository of essential textbooks. The assessment team saw on the VLE that it is easy for students to access these resources. Students told the assessment team that they found resources simple to find and use, and that they had the texts they needed for their course.
64. The College therefore has up-to-date higher education courses, and ensures that each higher education course remains up to date, principally through ensuring its teaching resources are aligned with the requirements of its awarding body. The College provides appropriate and up-to-date academic texts for students. Its plans to develop the size of its staff team, if delivered as planned, will allow staff more time to continue to develop and update teaching resources so that teaching remains up to date.

Educational challenge

65. The current Business courses provide educational challenge, in the view of the assessment team. The awarding body's learning outcomes, used by the College, demonstrate appropriate skills and requirements for each level of academic study, and the College's tutors are enthusiastic about the framework provided by the awarding body. They discussed a range of methods used to deliver teaching related to learning outcomes, including case studies, group discussions, and presentations.
66. Module descriptors at Levels 4 and 5, produced by the College and informed by the resources provided by their awarding body, set out the aims of the unit, the learning outcomes, and core

and optional resources which students can use through the module. The learning outcomes and core resources are appropriate for the level of study and provide students with a clear impression of the skills and knowledge they are expected to develop throughout each unit.

67. The student handbooks for the College's courses also set out the College's approach to teaching and learning, explaining that the College uses a range of methods including seminars, lectures, tutorials, and academic writing workshops. This demonstrates the College's understanding of the need to design teaching and learning that is educationally challenging for students.
68. Teaching materials viewed on the VLE indicate that the College uses a variety of teaching methods, including group discussions, students presenting to their peers, and quizzes. The variety of methods used is appropriate for the courses offered by the College and ensures that staff encourage students to think about course content in different ways and use taught content to produce different outputs in teaching sessions. This indicates that teaching sessions provide educational challenge.
69. Assignment briefs seen by the assessment team also indicate a good level of educational challenge as the tasks set are varied and require students to respond to prompts in different and challenging ways. Examples of assessment tasks which challenge students appropriately include writing a report or suggesting new practices for a business based on a case study.
70. The management team told the assessment team that they are aware of areas where the College could improve further in relation to how it engages students in teaching and learning to ensure they are educationally challenged. They discussed introducing new teaching methods which would limit the amount of teaching time based on tutors presenting and increase student engagement.
71. Students spoke positively of their teaching and learning experience, stating that they found the teaching engaging and challenging and that it requires them to complete a broad range of activities. In a student feedback survey summary from March 2024 all students agree or strongly agree with the statement 'my course has challenged me to achieve my best work'.

Coherent

72. The overall structure of the course is provided by the awarding body. This is set out for students clearly and comprehensibly in the course handbook, including the mandatory and optional units available and how assessment and feedback fit into their course. Courses include a suitable breadth and depth of content across their units.
73. The assessment team reviewed the content on the College's VLE and observed that, for each course, content on the VLE is split up week by week and includes slideshows and additional resources used for each week. This approach provides a clear structure for students, allowing them to see how each week's learning fits in with the content of the whole unit. It also allows students who miss any sessions to catch up on missed work so they can engage in the following sessions. Teaching staff told the assessment team that they answer questions and talk students through any content they miss to ensure they can engage fully in future sessions. The resources seen on the VLE demonstrate that courses introduce basic concepts before more advanced concepts, and the order of topics covered helps students grow their understanding throughout a unit.

74. Attendance can be an indicator that a course is coherent, as students see that attending sessions helps them build on their knowledge over time. The College stated that it collects class attendance data daily, and the assessment team saw attendance sign-in sheets at reception. Teaching staff told the assessment team that student attendance is at 80-90 per cent, and students concurred that sessions are well-attended. Where a student has attendance issues, the management team stated that it contacts the student to identify what support they could offer to improve attendance.
75. According to the College's teaching structure, each cohort attends in-person two days per week and have an additional half day of structured independent study. Students then complete additional work outside these hours on assignments. Students find this structure works well for their learning, because the two days in-person are constructive and help develop their knowledge and they can complete independent study outside of these days in a manner which suits their individual needs. This effective course structure contributes to the coherency of courses.

Effectively delivered

76. The College's model of two days of teaching and a half day of structured independent study supports the effective delivery of the course. Students reported that they enjoy their in-person teaching time, and value that it is condensed into two days to allow them the flexibility they require outside of their study time. This is an important feature of the College for the predominantly mature student population. The VLE sets out resources for teaching and learning week-by-week, meaning that students have good guidance on what activities and resources to use in their independent study time. They can also review the slideshows from the teaching sessions to consolidate their learning in their independent study time.
77. The student handbooks for the College's courses set out the College's approach to teaching, which includes seminars, lectures and academic writing workshops. Teaching staff told the assessment team how they use a range of teaching methods, including activities designed to facilitate students to carry out autonomous learning and group discussion. Students noted that their classes involve a variety of activities, such as presentations and group discussions and tasks. Staff told the assessment team that, when students are in sessions, staff can identify problems and provide bespoke support when needed. For example, one member of teaching staff told the team that they identified that one group struggled with referencing so led a session on this topic.
78. The teaching materials on the VLE demonstrate that staff use a variety of teaching methods, which encourages students to use taught content in a variety of ways – including group discussion, peer-to-peer presentations and quizzes. The slideshows demonstrate that tutors often introduce content, then ask students to complete an activity to apply taught content in new scenarios, such as through case studies.
79. The management team told the assessment team that they aim to introduce new teaching methods which would help tutors make better use of the new audio-visual technology in classrooms to improve the student experience. The academic manager told the assessment team that they lead a monthly quality meeting with tutors, which teaching staff agree is helpful in ensuring the team works in a coordinated way.

80. Given the number of the College's staff, informal appraisal is the main route for checking staff performance. The Principal regularly attends taught sessions for 10-15 minutes to check students' participation and the teaching methods used. This is a good method for the Principal to understand how staff deliver teaching, and staff told the assessment team that they found the Principal's feedback helped them improve their teaching. However, this appraisal and quality monitoring process is only sustainable with small numbers of classes running because it relies on the Principal having time to attend classes. The College might find it difficult to operate this approach as it proceeds with its plans to increase the number of Business students and introduce new Computing courses.
81. The College has recently developed staff appraisal and teaching observation policies. The assessment team's visit was early in the academic year, and no teaching staff had undergone the annual staff appraisal process detailed in the policy during the 2024-25 academic year. Teaching observations take place, but not fully in line with the process set out in the policy. For example, teaching staff stated they had received verbal feedback when the policy states that written feedback should be provided. The management team stated that ensuring the policies were enacted properly, including thoroughly recording the outcomes of appraisal and observation, is a priority.
82. The College's physical and digital resources facilitate effective teaching. Most classrooms include smartboard equipment, and the College told the assessment team that it had ordered smartboard equipment for classrooms currently without it. The College's VLE is well developed and has the capacity to support a growing student body. Teaching staff told the assessment team that they update the VLE weekly, and add resources including slides from teaching sessions, assignment briefs, course specifications, and links to repositories of relevant texts. Students report using the VLE every day as part of their study. The College stated that it would apply the approach to using the VLE currently used for Business courses to the planned Computing courses. It noted that part of its motivation for delaying the introduction of the Computing course was to ensure a new staff member had enough time to collaborate with the IT team to ensure the VLE had appropriate resources for effective delivery of the course.
83. Student feedback, collected through a survey each term, is also positive about the academic experience students receive. For example, in the March 2024 survey, all students surveyed 'definitely agree' or 'mostly agree' that:
- a. 'The course is intellectually stimulating.'
 - b. 'My course has challenged me to achieve my best work.'
 - c. 'My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt.'

Relevant skills

84. Students often join the College to gain experience to help them with businesses they run or work for, or as younger students exploring potential career options. The feedback from students was that their courses provide the skills development that they had hoped to get from the course to aid their future careers.

85. The unit descriptors provided by the College clearly set out aims and learning outcomes for each unit. The aims explain the relevance of the skills and knowledge gained through the unit to Business studies and how they will benefit students in business-related careers after their study. The learning outcomes also establish a clear set of skills relevant both to Business studies and future careers that students are expected to develop and will be assessed against.
86. The teaching resources viewed on the VLE demonstrate that the College's teaching sessions deliver relevant skills to students. The slideshows for teaching sessions show that staff often introduce students to content, then task them to apply this content to various scenarios including presentations and group discussions. Teaching sessions also make good use of case studies, helping students to understand how the content applies in real-world scenarios. These resources indicated to the assessment team that teaching sessions require students to practice and develop a range of skills relevant to business-related careers.
87. The assessment team considered a selection of assignment briefs and found that they test a range of relevant skills. The student assessment tasks include, for example, writing a report and suggesting new practices for a business based on a case study. These skills are both relevant to the course content and to potential careers working in or running businesses after completion of the course.
88. Teaching staff identified that some students present difficulties in understanding academic terminology and practice, including referencing and using appropriate academic texts. They reported that they support students within teaching time, in extra support sessions organised by the College, and through the VLE, to develop academic writing skills. The assessment team found the relevant academic writing resources on the VLE helpful for students and saw in the College's complaints log that it had organised additional academic writing sessions to help students develop their skills.
89. The assessment team was unable to view unit descriptors for the upcoming Computing courses, as the College had not yet produced them. However, the student handbook for Computing courses refers to the awarding body's learning outcomes and, should the provider follow the model it has created for unit descriptors and replicate the support it provides for skills development for students on its Business courses, the Computing courses offered will facilitate the development of relevant skills for students.

Line of enquiry conclusion

90. The evidence demonstrates that the College delivers a high quality academic experience at present. Courses are up to date, educationally challenging, coherent, effectively delivered, and, as appropriate to the subject matter of the courses, require students to develop relevant skills.
91. There is evidence that the College's courses are up to date, as course design documents and resources used for teaching align well with the learning outcomes of the awarding body and reflect developments in the field. The College has also increased online resources which ensure students have access to up-to-date academic texts. The College's courses provide educational challenge and are coherent, as demonstrated by the course handbooks, module descriptors, resources used for teaching such as slideshows and handouts, and information provided for students through the VLE. The assessment team considered that courses are

effectively delivered, evidenced by the effective balance of directed and independent study and its use of a range of teaching methods as shown through teaching resources and student handbooks. Courses teach and assess relevant skills, as set out in the module descriptors, examples of assessments, and resources used for teaching. Overall, students have a positive academic experience and the assessment team advised that the College delivers a high quality academic experience at present.

92. The College's capacity to continue to deliver a high quality academic experience considering planned growth is connected to topics discussed in line of enquiry 3. That line of enquiry discusses the College's capacity to recruit and develop additional staff in line with student number growth. Discussion of recruitment and retention of a staff team is in a separate line of enquiry, under OfS condition B2, because the requirement to have a staff team that is sufficient in number and appropriately qualified to deliver a high quality academic experience is within the scope of OfS condition B2.2.a.
93. The assessment team advised that the College is likely to maintain a high quality academic experience and remain compliant with condition B1, should the College recruit and retain sufficient qualified teaching staff. This is because the College's approach to delivering courses, detailed throughout line of enquiry 1, is robust and leads to a high quality academic experience. This has been evidenced, in particular, through student handbooks, module descriptors, examples of assessments, and teaching resources, as summarised in paragraph 91.
94. However, as discussed in line of enquiry 3, the assessment team had concerns about the College's capacity to recruit and retain sufficient staff. If the College cannot recruit and retain sufficient staff, there is a risk of non-compliance with condition B2 as the College expands. This could also impact on compliance with condition B1, because a staff team that is insufficient in size or not appropriately qualified may be unable to deliver high quality courses in the manner set out through this line of enquiry.
95. The assessment team primarily identified a risk of non-compliance with condition B2, discussed in line of enquiry 3. The team advised, though, that the OfS's consideration of regulatory risk related to condition B2 ought to consider closely the potential implications on the quality of the academic experience and compliance with condition B1.

Condition B2

96. The documentation provided by the College and principally reviewed by the team in relation to condition B2 included:

- Development plan
- Resources strategy
- Additional queries narrative response document
- Lease agreements for the College's site
- Policies and associated documents related to:
 - Staff and student inductions
 - Equality, diversity and inclusion
 - Staff appraisal
 - Observation of teaching
 - Admissions
 - Student complaints
- Information on the College's recruitment process
- Summary of a student feedback survey
- Minutes from selected meetings, including a management team meeting, a student representative meeting, and an academic board meeting.

97. During the site visit, the team met:

- The College's management team, including the Principal, Director of Quality, Academic Manager, Student Support Manager and IT Manager
- The College's four Business tutors
- Members of the College's administrative and support staff
- 13 students studying at both Levels 4 and 5.

98. The assessment team reviewed the College's VLE, including the resources made available to students through the VLE. The team also had a tour of the College's site to view the physical teaching spaces and resources available to students on-site. The team reviewed job adverts published by the College in the public domain.

99. The team assessed multiple relevant sources of information, as identified above. Following a risk-based approach, the team considered the lines of enquiry set out below.

Line of enquiry 2

The provision of sufficient physical and digital resources to ensure a high quality academic experience, at present and into the future, in light of planned growth in student numbers, teaching and administrative staff numbers.

100. The QSR stated that some of the information provided by the College to applicants was not transparent and may mislead students as to the resources available to them at the College and the nature of opportunities to progress to universities. It also noted that the College did not have a credible resources strategy for the further development and maintenance of learning resources, and found it did not have credible plans to develop its learning resources for its planned growth in student numbers.
101. This finding is connected to OfS condition B2.2.a, which requires a provider to take all reasonable steps to ensure each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives resources and support which are sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students, and those students succeed in and beyond higher education.
102. This line of enquiry focused on how the provision of physical spaces, including teaching and study spaces, aligns with the College's plans to grow its numbers of students and courses. The team considered the increase in spaces that would be necessary for the purposes of ensuring, for each cohort of students, a high quality academic experience for those students at present and in the future. The assessment team considered the current and planned physical spaces and sought to identify how the College connected plans for its physical spaces with planned student number growth.
103. This line of enquiry also included the assessment of physical and digital resources used for teaching and learning, and how the College plans to meet future needs. This included reviewing libraries, both physical and digital, IT infrastructure, equipment in teaching spaces, and the VLE. The assessment team considered how the College maintains the VLE and whether the College anticipates issues in expanding its digital resources for its planned increase in students and courses. The team had access to the VLE and received a demonstration from the College's IT manager during the visit. The assessment team evaluated other digital resources, including online library resources and tools for visualising and organising information.
104. The College's site is across three 'suites' in a large commercial property. Each suite is available to the College through a separate lease. The College does not directly hold any of these leases. One lease is held by the Directors of the College on an unlimited basis. A charitable foundation managed by the Directors of the College holds two leases, with the College named as guarantor. These two leases were agreed in 2024 for three years, with the option to extend to five years. The College did not foresee issues with extending these leases further. Though the College does not hold the leases directly, the assessment team considers that, because the Directors of the College hold the leases independently or through their charitable foundation, the lease arrangements are appropriate for the College's planned expansion.

105. The site is open from 0900-1800 from Monday to Friday, and students can use the six teaching spaces (when available) and two social and study rooms during this time. The site includes the following spaces:
- a. Four classrooms, with maximum occupancies of 30, 25, 25 and 20 students. Two of the classrooms have smartboard technology. The College told the team the other two would have smartboard technology imminently, as the College had placed an order that had not yet arrived. One of the classrooms includes a small library containing core texts.
 - b. Two computer suites, both with around 15 computers. The College also uses these suites as teaching spaces.
 - c. Two rooms available to students for independent study or socialising with peers.
106. The College informed the team that it does not currently have any students with declared physical disabilities, but it has lifts for access and the site is all on one level.
107. The assessment team discussed the College's plans for increasing student numbers with the College's management team. The College considers that it has a plan for modest growth and that it is on target to recruit its planned numbers of students for the 2024-25 academic year. Its plans for the growth in the numbers of students will stabilise at approximately 260 students in 2026-27. The College's resources strategy also factors in development of physical spaces and physical and digital resources. Regarding physical spaces, the strategy sets out how the College has expanded, and will continue to expand, its physical estate to ensure it has sufficient teaching rooms for planned growth. It also details expansion of physical and digital resources, including online text repositories, development of IT facilities, including computers on-site and the VLE. The assessment team considers the thorough plans a helpful guide for the College's approach to ensuring sufficient resources.
108. The College reported that it has already expanded its physical spaces to meet the demand of growing student numbers through acquiring two additional suites in 2024. The team viewed the existing teaching spaces available and considered them appropriate for the increase in student numbers. The College has sufficient teaching space, with appropriate audio-visual technology, to deliver teaching and has additional spaces for students' independent study.
109. Students have access to recently upgraded IT suites, a small library (one tall bookcase) and a student notice board in the main reception, which is used to display timetables and other administrative information. The assessment team noted that, although the physical library is modest, students primarily access books through the online libraries provided. Students stated that they find it easy to use the VLE, which has online libraries embedded, to access texts required for their course. They also stated that they always find space for independent study at the College outside of their teaching time.
110. The VLE software is an open-source platform with no limits on its usage. It is integral to the effective delivery of each course and students use it daily to access teaching presentations, submit assessments and access academic material and textbooks from third party providers. The College stated that it has weekly meetings to discuss the VLE and that it has considered how local universities use their VLEs in developing its own. The College is considering the introduction of quizzes to the VLE and other forms of engaging students, and it has plans to

increase the resources available on the VLE in line with the planned increase in students and courses.

111. Teaching and IT staff upload documents and provide resources ahead of classes, usually via weekly updates, and the IT team reported that it sends teaching staff reminders if staff do not upload resources on time. Students stated that they find accessing the VLE simple, its content good, and that they receive help to get set up on the VLE during their induction. The VLE is effective and helpful for students through their courses because it provides resources to aid their academic experience, including slides from taught sessions, online book repositories, and additional resources related to academic skills.
112. The College uses plagiarism detection software for assessments embedded in the VLE and introduces students to it during induction. The College reported that, prior to submitting final assessment pieces, students can submit a draft through the plagiarism detection software on the VLE to see whether plagiarism is detected. They can then amend their work once to remove any identified accidental plagiarism to help them learn about good academic practices. Teaching staff do not see or provide feedback on the draft submission; it is solely for the purpose of minimising accidental academic misconduct. Students confirmed they participate in this process and find it helpful for developing their academic writing skills.
113. Most students have a laptop or similar device and those without can use the computer resources at the College. They can also access the VLE through mobile phones. Following a recent refresh of IT facilities, including new computers in its computer suites, the College believes that existing equipment has a five-year lifespan, but it will review facilities after two to three years and update them as needed.
114. The College has appropriate software to provide students with access to necessary tools, including emails, peer-to-peer communication, word processing, spreadsheets, and other functions. It renews the contract for the software annually. IT accounts have two-factor authentication, and appropriate security software. Staff encourage students to use cloud storage, but they can also encrypt and store data on local devices.
115. The College decided not to recruit to the Computing courses in January and intends to recruit students to begin the course in May 2025. As part of its rationale for this, the College stated that staff who are hired to lead the Computing course will need sufficient time to develop the resources for teaching and the VLE. The College told the assessment team it had one tutor lined up to teach Computing part-time and had planned a second interview for a Computing course lead in late-October 2024. If this recruitment goes ahead as planned, it would provide the new teaching staff ample time to develop resources informed by the framework of the awarding body for a May 2025 start. The College also stated that it would not run the Computing course until it had appropriate staff in post, so students would allegedly not start a course which did not have appropriate teaching and VLE resources.
116. The assessment team's view is that the College provides sufficient physical and digital resources to ensure a high quality academic experience, at present and into the future, considering planned student number growth. Based on the evidence provided and the site visit, the assessment team noted that the physical estate has expanded suitably, including computer suites required for planned Computing courses. The VLE is well configured and contains helpful resources that add value to students' academic experience. The VLE and

online text repositories are also positively received by staff and students. The assessment of line of enquiry 2 did not identify any risks to compliance with OfS condition B2.2.a, in relation to the provision of physical and digital resources.

Line of enquiry 3

The provision of a staff team that are sufficient in number and appropriately qualified to deliver a high quality academic experience, including student support, at present and into the future, in light of planned growth in student numbers.

117. The QSR stated that the College did not have adequate plans for staff training in relation to admissions and equality, diversity and inclusivity. The QSR also noted concern that the College's approach to recruitment, induction and development for staff did not ensure staff were appropriately qualified, and that the College could provide sufficient continuity and consistency in its teaching team. The QSR raised concerns about the College's provision of student support, including a lack of clarity around staff roles and training for student support.
118. These findings relate to OfS condition B2.2.a, which requires that providers take all reasonable steps to ensure each cohort of students receive resources and support which are sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students, and those students succeed in and beyond higher education. As part of the provision of resources, providers must ensure that staff are sufficient in number, appropriately qualified, and deployed effectively to deliver in practice. As part of the provision of support, providers must provide appropriate academic support relevant to the course content and cohort, support needed to underpin successful learning, and support for students to understand and avoid academic misconduct.
119. This line of enquiry focused on the College's approach to recruiting, inducting and developing its staff team. The team considered whether the College's staff team is sufficient in number, and whether the College is appropriately planning for staff team growth in relation to its planned student number growth. The team also considered whether and how the College ensures appropriately qualified staff deliver teaching and provide learning opportunities at Levels 4 and 5. Additionally, the team reviewed how the College resources its admissions processes and its student support in order to provide a high quality academic experience.

Size and academic qualifications of the staff team

120. The College's plans to expand the Business course and launch the Computing courses depend upon staff recruitment aligned with this growth. The College intends to grow from a total of 44 students in the 2023-24 academic year, to 259 students in the 2026-27 academic year. It plans for student numbers to plateau at around 260 from the 2027-28 academic year onwards.
121. The College's teaching staff currently includes the Academic Manager, one business tutor working at 0.8 full time equivalent (FTE), and three sessional tutors contracted to work 16 hours per week. This is adequate for its current student numbers, but the College recognises the need for growth and the College's formal Development Plan includes planned growth in staff numbers.

122. Based on the information provided in the Development Plan, the assessment team calculated estimates for the College’s student-to-staff ratios, as an indication of the volume of teaching resource relative to student growth. Table 2 sets out these figures in the form ‘estimated students: one FTE of estimated teaching resource’.

Table 2: Estimated student-to-staff ratios

| Course type | 2024-25 academic year | 2025-26 academic year | 2026-27 academic year |
|-------------------|--|---|---|
| Business courses | 60.8 : 1 | 42.7 : 1 | 38.65 : 1 |
| Computing courses | 37.5 : 1 The College also intends to employ one hourly-paid tutor, with an unspecified number of hours. This would reduce this ratio. | 44 : 1 The College also intends to employ two hourly-paid tutors, with an unspecified number of hours. This would reduce this ratio. | 58 : 1 The College also intends to employ two hourly-paid tutors, with an unspecified number of hours. This would reduce this ratio. |

123. The planned growth in teaching staff on Business courses would lead to fewer students per one FTE of teaching resource year-on-year. Conversely, the planned growth in teaching staff on Computing courses would lead to an increase in students per one FTE of teaching resource year-on year. However, the College intends to recruit either one or two hourly-paid teaching staff each year for an unspecified number of hours, which, if successful, would increase its teaching resource and reduce the student-to-staff ratios presented in Table 2.

124. The assessment team considered that the estimated student-to-staff ratios are reasonable, and, should it implement the Development Plan successfully, the College’s staff team would increase at an appropriate rate in line with student growth in a manner that should enable to College to maintain a high quality academic experience. Of course, any failure to recruit staff as planned alongside growth in student numbers could lead to student-to-staff ratios becoming less reasonable and put at risk the College’s ability to provide a high quality academic experience.

125. All current teaching staff told the assessment team that they hold a relevant Masters’ degree or PhD, meaning that they all have an appropriate level of academic qualification to teach courses at Levels 4 and 5. All current staff also told the assessment team that they have experience of teaching in UK higher education providers and, as the College seeks this experience in new staff, it is likely that all staff will continue to have this background. The current part-time staff told the assessment team that they have other fractional or sessional jobs at other higher education providers. They have fixed-term contracts for a certain number of terms at the College, with fixed hours of employment. The College’s Development Plan outlines intentions to recruitment more permanent staff. The current staff all reported that they do not experience or envisage issues with balancing responsibilities between different employers.

126. The College reported that its immediate staffing needs are to recruit a Registrar and a Computing course lead, and that it would advertise for the Registrar role, to work at 0.4-0.6 FTE, following the visit. The Registrar will gradually take on the responsibilities of the Director

of Quality, facilitating the phasing out of this role. The College noted that it expects that it will not be able to hire someone with significant experience in a Registrar role because, in its view, there are limited people with such experience in the job market. The College stated it expects it would need to train the person they hire in the specifics of the Registrar role, and that the Director of Quality would remain in post until the Registrar was sufficiently trained up.

127. The assessment team saw the advert for the Registrar role online and identified some concerns with the College's recruitment approach for this role. The role title is 'Quality Assurance Officer.' The role is advertised as part-time, starting at 0.4 FTE and increasing to 0.6 FTE as student numbers increase. The low initial fraction reduces the cost to the College but the incumbent may not be in a position subsequently to increase their fraction to 0.6 FTE if they combine this role with another elsewhere. This increases the risk that student number growth will outpace staff resource growth. The salary – 'from £35k' – is low for this type of role, especially since the salary is, presumably, pro rata. However, the 'from' implies that a higher salary may be negotiated.
128. The charitable foundation run by the same Directors as the College is simultaneously advertising for an 'Educational Quality Officer'. Much of the job description is identical, and it includes references to students, Anglo Skills College, the College's awarding body, and to other aspects that the team were told are not within the charitable foundation's remit. Given the relationship between the College and the charitable foundation, if the roles are actually for two posts, the two roles could be complementary and might mean one individual could hold both posts in a full-time capacity. However, the College or charitable foundation might be effectively subsidising the other if the fractions for each role do not reflect the work carried out. While it is open to commercial enterprises to allow staff to work for charities, it might not be appropriate for someone funded by a charity to perform tasks for a commercial organisation unless the charity is suitably reimbursed under an agreed contract.
129. If the College is using the charitable foundation's platform to recruit directly to the College, this might dissuade candidates if they discover during the application process that they would in fact be working for a different and non-charitable organisation. The College's page on its recruitment platform also includes several critical reviews from previous employees, to which the College has responded in an unprofessional tone, including calling one reviewer a 'joke' for the review they had shared. This could dissuade high quality candidates from applying to the College in future and might put at risk its plans to recruit successfully.
130. The College originally intended to launch its Computing courses in September 2024. It was unsuccessful in hiring a Computing course lead, and decided to delay the course's commencement until January 2025. During the visit, the College noted that, having still not recruited a Computing lead, beginning the courses in January 2025 was not feasible, and delayed further to May 2025. The College told the assessment team it had one tutor lined up to teach Computing part-time and had planned a second interview for a Computing course lead in late-October 2024. It believed the delay would not cause adverse financial consequences, and its priority was ensuring the course was well managed once it did start. This demonstrates that the College takes appropriate action to ensure courses do not run if the College does not have appropriate staff.
131. The Computing lead post was advertised in May 2024 as a 'Computing tutor'. The role was listed as full-time with a salary of £21,000-25,000 per annum. This is a relatively low salary for

a higher education teaching role in the UK and the job title does not fully reflect the nature of the role, if this post-holder is to lead and develop the computing course. This might impact the ability of the College to attract the right candidate.

132. On one hand, if the College is unable to recruit a Computing lead, and therefore does not launch Computing courses, then there is little risk to students aside from disappointing those applying for a course that will not run. The more tangible risk is if the College does recruit a Computing lead and commences the course, but then either does not retain the staff or over-recruits students but is unable to recruit further staff, leading to an unfeasible student-to-staff ratio that would put at risk a high quality academic experience. On the College's Business courses, the larger staff team means the College has some capacity and contingency to have tutors fill in for others on a short-term basis. The same is not planned for the Computing courses, where the College will have considerable reliance on a single tutor and course lead. Business teaching staff stated that they might help with the Computing courses teaching the more basic elements of the course or filling in for occasional sessions, but could not teach more specialist content.
133. It is difficult to assess whether the College's approach to staff recruitment is realistic and robust. The efforts to recruit the Registrar and Computing lead do not suggest that the College has changed its recruitment approach. The current approach has had mixed results including successfully hiring enough Business tutors for the 2024-25 academic year but failing to recruit a Computing lead.
134. The College recognises it has difficulties recruiting appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Information submitted about the College's experience of a previous recruitment process for the Academic Manager role shows that for one post it had 35 applicants, but most did not meet the job criteria and it only shortlisted three individuals. The College states that income from student numbers growth will facilitate a stronger financial position and allow the College to remunerate staff more competitively. This would aid with attracting new staff when recruiting, but indicates that the College may only plan to remunerate more competitively to seek appropriate staff after it has expanded its student numbers. As the College needs to increase staff numbers alongside student numbers, the assessment team noted a risk that the College may struggle to attract the teaching staff required to realise its business plan.
135. The small size of the teaching and management team at the College makes it susceptible, like many small organisations, to single points of failure. The College did not articulate any explicit plans to manage staffing shortages, including those caused by illness or resignation. It recognises the risk but argues that it has managed the risk informally but effectively so far. The College currently relies upon staff being willing to go beyond their contracted hours to ensure it covers all its teaching. Teaching staff stated that they were happy to work additional hours where required, and the College senior managers stated that it remunerates staff for additional teaching hours. Teaching staff and students stated that no teaching sessions had been missed due to staff absence, so the College's informal approach appears sufficient at present. However, as the College grows the number of Business cohorts and introduces the Computing course, the incidents of staff absences affecting teaching will increase and there is a risk that the College's informal approach may struggle to keep up with the complexity of managing resource across multiple cohorts. As seen in Table 2, the estimated student-to-staff ratios based on the College's Development Plan suggest that College intends to increase its level of teaching resource in tandem with its student growth. This planned staff number growth

and higher proportion of full-time staff would lower the risk of single points of failure and staff absence, but the College would need to have appropriate systems in place to manage its staff team accordingly.

136. As a whole, the College heavily depends on the Principal and Director of Quality because they hold most of the tacit and explicit organisational knowledge. The College is training a new Academic Manager role to take on some of the work of the Principal and the Director of Quality, while the advertised Registrar or 'Quality Assurance Officer' will similarly take on some responsibilities. Both the Principal and the Director of Quality stated in various meetings that they recognised the need to redistribute some of their knowledge and tasks and have made some progress towards this. Nevertheless, the College's over-reliance on its Principal and Director of Quality is only partially mitigated and, as with many small businesses, the College is very reliant on its small senior team.
137. The Principal almost solely carries out all staff recruitment, interviewing candidates individually. Having only one person handling staff interviews will likely be unsustainable as staff numbers grow and it would be better practice to have a hiring panel, to mitigate the risk of bias and ensure the process includes challenge. This limited use of staff in staff recruitment may also hamper efforts to recruit new staff if the Principal is unable to allocate appropriate time to it. The College stated it is training the Academic Manager in recruitment to support the Principal, which will helpfully distribute the workload of recruitment activities.
138. In the short term, there would not appear to be a risk to teaching delivery, assessments, awards or external verification from the loss of either of the Principal or Director of Quality as the Academic Manager and teaching staff have the knowledge and experience to deliver these. The College's administrative and student support functions would continue to operate. However, in the medium to long term, the operational capacity of the College is at risk, especially if the Principal becomes unavailable. The College may struggle to recruit new students or staff due to the Principal's sole responsibility for these functions. Also, the College's ability to comply with the requirements of its awarding body and of the OfS may be put at risk due to the Director of Quality's exclusive expertise on these requirements.
139. In summary, the College currently has a staff team of adequate size for its courses, and teaching staff have appropriate academic qualifications. While the staff team remains small, the College has single points of failure in its operations which present operational continuity and compliance risks, and risks to maintaining a high quality academic experience. Though the College's development plan states an intention to increase the size of its staff team, the issues identified with the College's approach to recruitment and mixed track record led the assessment team to identify a risk that the College may not recruit the required staff members as its student numbers grow.
140. It is commendable that the College has delayed starting the Computing courses until it has recruited appropriate staff. However, its evidential record of recruitment challenges presents a risk that, if a current member of teaching staff leaves mid-way through a course, the College might have difficulty replacing them. This might materially affect students since plans to manage single points of failure are informal and not fully articulated. There remains, therefore, a risk that the staff team may not remain sufficient in number and appropriately qualified to ensure a high quality academic experience. This means there is a potential ongoing risk to

compliance with condition B2.2.a in relation to the provision of resources to ensure a high quality academic experience.

Staff induction

141. The College has a staff induction policy, which sets out the aims of staff induction, the policies staff should be aware of through induction, and those responsible for induction related activities. Induction includes practical training sessions, on areas such as IT, safeguarding, and health and safety. The College also introduces staff to key policies, including on academic practice and misconduct, complaints, appeals, student attendance requirements, and safeguarding.
142. The College noted a priority for all new teaching staff to familiarise them with the awarding body's requirements. The College did not articulate a specific way in which it does this for new starters, but stated that the management team and teaching team meet together every four to six weeks to discuss the College's compliance with the awarding body's requirements.
143. The induction policy has a helpful set of principles and lists key policies to discuss, but is not very specific about how induction operates in practice. This is workable for the College's current size, but the College might benefit from more detailed induction planning for future new members of staff to ensure a consistent and appropriate induction process for all staff. As with staff development (discussed below), the College's approach is relatively informal and, while appropriate for the College's current size, will need to be further developed to meet the College's growth. This is because, as the staff team grows in size, there is a risk that an informal approach to induction may lead to teaching staff not being confident in following policies or prepared for their roles in supporting a high quality academic experience.

Staff training and appraisal

144. The College has several mechanisms designed to ensure that the staff team can deliver a high quality academic experience.
145. The College created a staff performance and appraisal policy during the 2023-24 academic year. The policy includes information on how the College will operate and record staff appraisals, and how a staff member can dispute appraisal outcomes. The policy details appraisal principles, how the policy will be implemented, what information from staff underpins the process, and potential process outcomes. The information included in the policy is appropriate because it sets out a clear process for an annual review of the performance of teaching staff and encourages consideration of appropriate evidence. The policy lacks, however, information on how feedback for staff is shared and how the College will follow up on weak practice areas to check for improvement. This means it is unclear how any issues with tutor performance are, or will be, addressed promptly. Considering the College's high proportion of new tutors and its intention to hire more, a lack of clarity on feedback to help tutors improve creates a risk that it will not respond appropriately to teaching from new staff that is not high quality.
146. The policy is not delivered in practice as written at present. Of its current teaching team, one member was at the College last year and underwent appraisal. The other four tutors are new this year and, as annual staff appraisal occurs later in the academic year, the College has not

yet formally appraised these tutors. When asked about processes for onboarding staff, the College did not articulate any formal probation processes for new staff members.

147. The assessment team received three staff appraisal report forms from the 2023-24 academic year. One was for a current tutor, and the others were for staff who had left the College. The current tutor stated that they had not been through a formal appraisal process, despite the existence of paperwork for their appraisal. There were duplications and inconsistencies within two of the reports, which made it appear to the team as if one of the forms might have been largely copied from the other. In meetings with the assessment team, the College acknowledged the errors in the documentation and agreed that it needed to better embed and apply the staff appraisal process. The management team claimed that the sample of appraisal documents do not reflect the level of support staff get in practice, as much of the support they receive is informal.
148. The College also has an observation of teaching policy, which sets out in detail the process for annual teaching observations and feedback for tutors. The policy lists the Academic Manager as the lead on this process, suggesting the College's plans for the Academic Manager to take on some of the Principal's work are being followed. The observation policy, if carried out properly, is appropriate because it articulates the purpose of observation, expected pre-observation activities, behaviour during observation, and post-observation actions. The policy includes a comprehensive set of questions across all aspects of teaching and provides for the observed staff member to reflect on their performance.
149. As with the staff appraisal policy, the College is not carrying out the policy as written at present. The current teaching staff stated they had never received written feedback from teaching observation, as required by the policy. The College did provide two examples of teaching observation records from the 2023-24 academic year, for tutors no longer at the College. As with the appraisal form examples, there were some duplications between the forms, in this case in describing the teaching session observed. The College acknowledged again some issues with the documentation as a result of not fully embedding the process yet.
150. The College told the assessment team it carries out more frequent informal but undocumented teaching observations. The Principal stated that they regularly attend taught sessions delivered by each tutor, for 10-15 minutes, to check on lessons and to consider, for instance, if students are participating and to see what teaching methods tutors use. Both tutors and staff agreed the Principal frequently attends sessions, and tutors reported that they receive helpful verbal feedback informally. This informal process is a good method for the Principal to get a feel for how teaching is delivered and received and to provide feedback to staff. However, this process is only sustainable with small numbers of classes running and may not remain possible as courses and cohorts increase.
151. Where staff appraisals or teaching observations identify a development need, the Principal told the assessment team that they work with the tutor to create a plan for development or training. The appraisal and observation report examples do include sections on training and development needs. The sections identify areas for improvement, but detail is limited on the training needed and how the College will monitor improvement. The assessment team heard that training is mostly internally run, often via peer-to-peer training, though the College stated it plans to bring in external trainers in the future.

152. The College told the assessment team that it holds a catch-up meeting every Monday and Friday involving the Principal, Academic Manager and tutors to discuss their teaching for that week, seek advice and share information with colleagues. The teaching staff also indicated that the Principal had discussed setting up a monthly continuous professional development (CPD) session for staff, but that this has not started yet.
153. There appeared to be errors in the staff appraisal forms shown to the assessment team and the College's formal processes for appraising and developing staff are, at present, not carried out in line with written policies. However, the College's small size and close working relationships among staff mean that the College can, in theory, monitor its staff performance and provide effective support to staff where needed at its current size. Evidence for the effectiveness of the current informal process is mostly anecdotal, because the College lacks comprehensive written records of staff development at present. The assessment team noted a risk that, if the College cannot successfully implement its formal policies as it grows its staff team, the informal approach the College described may not sufficiently ensure the performance of the staff team is monitored, nor their ability to support a high quality academic experience. While the College recognises the importance of embedding the appraisal and observation policies more effectively in the future, its current informal and unrecorded processes provide no evidence of the formal monitoring of the quality of teaching, and there is no evidence of new teaching staff being formally appraised.

Training of staff in admissions and equality and diversity

154. A key point raised in the QSR was around the College's admissions policies and processes and the importance of admissions staff understanding them. In response to the QSR, the College has developed a clear admissions policy and a selection of accompanying forms for use in the process. There is also a student admissions checklist for staff to use to ensure they complete all necessary actions. The assessment team considers that these documents articulate a comprehensive admissions process, with clear admissions criteria and a thorough process for considering student applications, including an interview for all students.
155. Some documents reference actions for an 'admissions officer.' The College does not have a staff member of this title, but told the assessment team that the Principal and a specific member of the administrative team manage admissions with the administrative staff member carrying out the actions stated as completed by the admissions officer.
156. The Principal told the team that they currently carry out student interviews alone – this contradicts the admissions policy which states that two individuals carry out the interview. The College recognises the need to involve more individuals in admissions, and told the assessment team that it will involve the Academic Manager in admissions from the next recruitment round and that they were not in post in time for the previous recruitment round. The Registrar, once appointed, will take on responsibilities for admissions alongside the Academic Manager. This will make the College's admissions processes more robust because it will mean that decisions on admissions are made by a group of people, mitigating the risk of bias and ensuring there is opportunity for challenge when ensuring applicants have met admissions criteria and are a good fit for the College.
157. The College recognised that the Academic Manager and Registrar will both require training to participate in admissions processes. The comprehensiveness of the policy and accompanying

documents means that the staff members starting involvement in admissions will have a clear process to follow.

158. The College has an equality and diversity policy. The policy contains actions for the College to ensure admissions processes and the student experience on courses provide equality of opportunity. There is a process for monitoring, recording and reviewing performance against the policy, and the policy aligns with the admissions policy. The College has not had any formal or informal student complaints related to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) concerns. The student and staff induction policies both include the equality and diversity policy in their list of topics, and slides used in training on the policy were shared with the assessment team. Teaching staff and current students confirmed that they received EDI training as part of their induction.
159. The new policies and plans to introduce new members of the management team to admissions work demonstrate to the assessment team that the College plans to improve its approach to admissions and will ensure that staff involved have the information and training required to conduct fair admissions processes. However, as with other policies on staff appraisal, teaching observation, and induction, the College has not wholly enacted the admissions policy yet.

Student academic support

160. Students at the College told the assessment team of their concern that the College's planned growth would mean a loss of the College's close-knit community feel. They felt that they were well supported in their studies by their tutors, with whom they had good relationships. Student survey data presents a similar view, where all students agreed with the statements: 'I have been able to contact staff when needed' and 'I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course.' The assessment team noted the importance of the College growing its capacity for student academic support in line with its student number growth.
161. The College provides students with an induction programme. This includes introductions to health and safety on the campus and key policies such as equality and diversity, plagiarism and the use of detection software, using the VLE and the College's IT infrastructure. The approach to induction is set out in a policy document, listing key topics to cover through induction. Students stated that they had received these introduction sessions. During the term, staff give students support with practical IT skills, including using computers, word processing, and using the College's online text repositories.
162. The College provides additional resources for academic support through the VLE, including guidance on academic writing and referencing. Students reported that these resources are beneficial to their study, and the assessment team considered them to be helpful resources.
163. The College reported examples of how its teaching staff offered support to students with their studies on the basis of need. This included one tutor who provided one-to-one help with academic writing to three students who asked for help, and one tutor who stated they ran a session on academic referencing in response to a student struggling with this skill. This additional support relies on tutors observing a problem and having the capacity to provide support outside their teaching hours and sometimes outside their contracted hours. At the College's current student-to-staff ratio, this works in practice as the staff know students well and are willing to work outside of contracted hours to support students.

164. This is not a sustainable approach, however, because it is not reasonable to consistently rely on staff working outside contracted hours to provide student support. The College's Development Plan sets out intentions to hire additional full-time and sessional teaching staff each academic year, and to increase the hours of sessional staff as student numbers increase, to ensure that the College has enough staff to deliver academic support to students within contracted hours. The College employs a Student Support Manager and a Student Support Officer who provide support in addition to the teaching staff. The Development Plan also states an intention to increase the total FTE of the College's student support staff, who provide both academic and pastoral support. If the College can increase the number of teaching and student support staff as outlined in the Development Plan, the assessment team considers that the College will have sufficient resource to deliver academic support to students. The overall decrease in student-to-staff ratio, demonstrated in Table 2, indicates this. However, given the risks related to the College's current approach to staff recruitment discussed in this line of enquiry, there is a further risk that the College is unable to expand its student support provision if it cannot recruit staff as planned.
165. The College's provision of academic support functions well enough at present due to the close relationships between staff and students. Staff can and do identify students' academic support needs and provide additional support, on top of the package of support provided through induction and the VLE. The clear message from students was that they feel well supported by the College's staff. The College intends to grow its staff team in line with student number growth, which would facilitate a continuation of the College's personal approach to student support. However, as is a common theme through this line of enquiry, the assessment team's concern that the College may have difficulty meeting its planned growth in staff numbers due to recruitment challenges means that there is a risk that the College may not develop sufficient staff resource to deliver appropriate academic support.

Line of enquiry conclusion

166. The College has developed a selection of new policies and processes for managing its staff team and the quality of the academic experience it delivers, including policies on staff induction, appraisal and teaching observation, and admissions. The assessment team advises that the processes, as written, are clear and establish reasonable approaches for inducting and appraising staff. Each policy sets out suitable principles and steps to follow. The assessment team did not, however, see sufficient credible evidence that the policies are implemented in practice. It found errors in documentation related to the appraisal and observation policies, a lack of clarity on how the College would follow up on areas for improvement from appraisal and observation, and a lack of formal monitoring on the performance of new teaching staff. Additionally, the College does not follow the admissions policy because admissions interviews do not involve a panel as described in the policy document.
167. The College acknowledged the need to more effectively embed the new policies, but the fact that it does not follow its policies at present indicates a risk that the College will continue to only partially follow its stated policies.
168. This poses a risk to students because it suggests the College may not be able to effectively monitor the quality of teaching delivered by its teaching staff, especially as new staff are recruited. The College's new teaching staff for the 2024-25 academic year had not undergone

formal performance management processes at the time of the visit, and the College was unable to articulate any probation process. While the evidence, discussed through line of enquiry 1, suggests that the College's teaching staff deliver a high quality academic experience at present, the lack of robust performance management means that there is no effective mechanism for the College to assure itself that it is maintaining its high quality provision. This is particularly a risk as the College intends to grow its staff team. The assessment team recognise a risk that, should the College fail to more effectively embed its appraisal and observation policies, it may not identify and support any new staff members delivering a below-par academic experience.

169. With regard to the admissions policy, the College recognises the need to improve its practice by involving the Academic Manager and Registrar, once appointed, in admissions activity. This would ensure the admissions policy is enacted as written, including use of an admissions panel to facilitate challenge, rather than one individual managing the process and making sole admissions decisions. This would also make the process more sustainable when managing the admissions of larger student cohorts.
170. The size of the College's staff team at present is sufficient for the courses it offers, and the current student cohort speak positively of the academic experience they receive. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified and appeared genuinely invested in the College during meetings. The staff team is currently sufficient in number and appropriately qualified to deliver the courses the College offers. The Development Plan shows a reasonable intended rate of staff growth, relative to student number growth. The decision to postpone the Computing courses until an appropriate staff team is in post shows the College's commitment to ensuring it has appropriate staff in place for its courses. Despite difficulty appointing a Computing lead, the College has successfully recruited a team of appropriately qualified staff for this academic year's Business courses. The commitment of teaching staff to the College means that short-term staffing issues are able to be resolved through good will.
171. There is, however, risk related to whether the College can ensure that the staff team remains sufficient in number, appropriately qualified, and deployed effectively as the College's student numbers grow. This is because the College has experienced difficulties in recruiting staff, does not have a robust system for managing single points of failure, and has critical posts to fill as identified. The assessment team did not see evidence that the College would change its approach to recruitment, which has so far yielded mixed results. The College remains highly vulnerable operationally should the Principal or Director of Quality become unable to continue working at the College. Additionally, the College's difficulties recruiting a Computing lead indicate that any unforeseen loss of teaching staff on this course in future could lead to significant difficulty in replacing teaching staff mid-year, and put at risk the delivery of a high quality academic experience.
172. If the College is unable to recruit the required additional staff or embed its appraisal and observation policies effectively, there is a risk it will not consistently maintain a staff team that is sufficient in number or appropriately qualified to deliver in practice a high quality academic experience to each cohort of students, as required by condition B2.2.a. There is, in the assessment team's view, an ongoing risk of non-compliance with condition B2.2.a.

Line of enquiry 4

Provision of routes for students to provide feedback and raise complaints or appeals in relation to their academic experience.

173. The QSR stated that the College did not have an appropriate formal complaints process.
174. This finding is relevant to OfS condition B2.2.b, which requires that providers take all reasonable steps to ensure effective engagement with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students, and those students succeed in and beyond higher education.
175. This line of enquiry focused on how the College facilitates complaints and feedback and the accessibility of complaints and feedback processes. The assessment team considered documented processes for student complaints and feedback, and examples of how the College manages student complaints and feedback using its processes. The College told the assessment team that no students had made formal complaints since the publication of its complaints policy in the 2023-24 academic year, so the team sought to determine whether students understood how to, and felt able to, make complaints and share feedback.
176. Students can provide formal feedback at three opportunities per academic year, via student surveys conducted through the VLE each term. The College submitted a summary of student feedback from a survey completed in March 2024. The survey asks students to select whether they definitely agree, mostly agree, neither agree nor disagree, mostly disagree, or definitely disagree with a series of statements about their academic experience. Topics include: experience of teaching and learning; assessment, marking and feedback; academic support; organisation of courses; resources; community; and student feedback processes. There is an open-text option for students to share specific points.
177. In the survey results shared with the assessment team, several of the open-text responses show that students were concerned about poor quality wi-fi on-site. The College stated that it recognised this issue for students as a result of the survey and upgraded its wi-fi infrastructure in response. The assessment team saw the upgraded infrastructure during the visit, and students commented that the improved wi-fi had made studying on-site better. The upgraded wi-fi demonstrates the College's responsiveness to student feedback.
178. The College has a student representative for each student cohort, who is elected by their peers in a vote. Students stated that the student representative system works well. Student representatives stated they felt able to go to the College's staff with issues on behalf of their peers. Minutes provided for a student representative meeting, and a subsequent academic board meeting, show that the feedback from student representatives is collected and informs management meetings. Student representatives attend academic board meetings and, in the minutes provided, it devoted an agenda item to discussing feedback raised by the student representatives. Students told the assessment team that the Principal attends many teaching sessions and is generally approachable.
179. The College has a complaints policy in place with four stages. Stage one is to speak to a member of staff to resolve the complaint through conciliation. Students can escalate a

complaint to stage two by making a formal written complaint which goes to the Principal. Where the Principal has a conflict of interest, other members of the management team, including the Director of Quality and Academic Manager, can consider the complaint. Stage three is an internal appeals process, if the student is not content that the issue is resolved. Stage four sets out how the student can then escalate their complaint to the Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) if they do not feel the matter is resolved after an internal appeal.

180. The complaints process is available on the College's website and the VLE, and the College informs students of the policy through the student handbook related to their course. Students reported to the team that they understand how to make a complaint, and that the College's termly feedback surveys provide another way for them to provide feedback.
181. Student complaints are recorded in a complaints log. The log records the complainant and their complaint, and the attempted resolution through stages one and two of the complaints process. The log shows several student complaints related to wi-fi quality, the number of computers in one of the College's teaching rooms, and some groups of students self-reporting difficulty with academic writing skills. The log shows how the College resolved each issue through stage one of the complaints process, including through upgrading the wi-fi and computer room, and offering additional academic writing skills sessions to students. Students stated that they were pleased with the College's response to complaints about the quality of wi-fi.
182. Since the development of the policy in the 2023-24 academic year, the College has received no complaints that required resolution through stage two of the process since it had resolved all complaints at stage one. Though untested so far, the policy documentation provides clear processes for stages two to four of the complaints process and suitable options for escalation for complainants dissatisfied with the resolution of their complaint at stage one.
183. In the assessment team's view, the College has developed appropriate policies and processes for student feedback and complaints. In relation to student feedback, the College's termly surveys and student representative system provide timely opportunities for students to provide feedback on their academic experience. The complaints process is clearly set out in policy documentation, which is easily available to students. The process includes a reasonable set of stages of escalation that allow students to seek a resolution to their complaints. Students feel able to raise concerns and issues and the College evidenced examples of how it had responded to feedback. This indicates that the College's approach to student engagement is effective, fit for purpose and the team did not identify any risks to compliance with OfS condition B2.2.b.

Condition B4

184. The documentation provided by the College and principally reviewed by the team in relation to condition B4 included:

- Admissions policy, process flowchart, and student application form
- Academic appeals policy, process flowchart, and student appeals form
- Complaints log
- Academic misconduct policy
- Student handbooks
- Student induction policy
- Validation and external examiner reports from the College's awarding body
- Examples of student assessed work at both Levels 4 and 5 – including assignment briefs, student work with tutor feedback, and internal verification reports
- Slides from a training session delivered to staff related to plagiarism detection software.

185. During the site visit, the team met:

- The College's management team, including the Principal, Director of Quality, Academic Manager, Student Support Manager and IT Manager
- The College's four Business tutors
- Members of the College's administrative and support staff
- 13 students studying at both Levels 4 and 5.

186. The assessment team reviewed the College's VLE, including the resources available to students related to assessment.

187. The team assessed multiple relevant sources of information, as identified above. Following a risk-based approach, the team considered the line of enquiry set out below.

Line of enquiry 5

The capacity of the College to ensure effective assessments that are valid, reliable and lead to credible awards, at present and into the future, in light of planned growth in student numbers.

188. The QSR stated concerns related to the training of staff involved in admissions, the recruitment of appropriately qualified staff, and the clarity of the College's complaints processes.

189. The findings related to staff training for admissions relates to OfS condition B4.2.d, which requires providers to ensure academic regulations are designed to ensure effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the higher education course. The team considered whether the College's academic regulations are designed to enable it to effectively assess technical proficiency in the English language, either at the point of admitting students to the course or otherwise.
190. The findings related to recruitment of appropriately qualified staff and the clarity of complaints processes are connected to OfS conditions B4.2.a, B4.2.b and B4.2.c, which require a provider to ensure that students are assessed effectively, each assessment is valid and reliable, and that academic regulations are designed to ensure that students' awards are credible. The team considered whether the College's teaching and management staff deliver effective, valid and reliable assessments, and whether, with respect to complaints processes, academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible because they reflect students' knowledge and skills.
191. This line of enquiry focused on the delivery of assessment and awards across modules and years. The team sought to identify how staff design assessments and whether these are valid and reliable, and students are effectively assessed. The team also considered how the College supports staff with designing valid and reliable assessments, including through formal discussion with teaching staff during appraisal. Additionally, in considering whether assessment is effective, the team reviewed approaches to managing academic misconduct and the risks associated with the use of artificial intelligence (AI). Discussion with students explored students' experiences of assessments, formal and informal complaints, marking and outcomes.
192. The College has worked with an awarding body since 2012. The awarding body provides learning outcomes, unit descriptors, assessment templates for Level 4 courses, assessment guidance for Level 5 courses, and textbooks, resources, and journal articles. The awarding body does not provide lesson plans or wholly developed assessments. The College supports students to demonstrate the learning outcomes through teaching, then designs and delivers assessments based on guidance and templates from its awarding body. The College told the assessment team that its teaching and management staff hold a meeting every four to six weeks to discuss how they are delivering courses and meeting the awarding body's requirements.
193. The awarding body carries out remote external verification for assessment processes and awards at the College. Each term, the College sends a sample of the assignments it has designed for approval prior to using them to assess students, and sends examples of student assessed work for the awarding body to validate marks and awards. The College also undergoes an annual review of its academic management. The assessment team has seen the awarding body's annual management review for 2023-24 and external examiner report from March 2024 which both state that the College's assessment and awards practices are good and in line with the awarding body's expectations. In particular, the external examiner's report states that, 'the quality and level of detail of the assessment materials provided for the external examiner activity is good and is documented clearly' and 'all assignments sampled by the external examiner were judged to be reliable, valid and fit for purpose'.

194. The College told the team that all tutors have masters' degrees or higher-level qualifications in relevant subjects to the courses they teach. The Principal, Director of Quality and one business tutor also have internal verification experience. Therefore, staff have an appropriate level of subject expertise to design and deliver assessments at Levels 4 and 5.
195. The College provided a sample of assessments. Each assessment included the assignment brief, marking criteria, student assessed work, feedback provided to students, and evidence of internal verification. The sample demonstrated a clear connection between the assignments and the awarding body's learning outcomes. Guidance for students was helpful, as it set out clearly what skills each assignment assessed and what the College required of students to achieve certain grades. The sample of students' work showed that marking is accurate, and the feedback is good because it provides sufficient information for the student to understand why they have received a particular grade and what they might do to improve going forward. There is evidence of appropriate internal verification of marks on all assessments sampled, with a secondary tutor or the Principal checking that marking was carried out appropriately for each assessment.
196. The College uses the VLE to share assessment briefs with students, for students to submit assessments, and for issuing marks and feedback to students. Students reported that they find the approach easy to use and find it helpful that assessment information is easily available through the VLE. The assessment team's review of the VLE confirmed that resources and guidance related to assessment are easily accessible to students.
197. The College has a clear academic misconduct policy available on its website. The student handbooks summarise information on academic misconduct, and reference the main policy available on the website.
198. The College told the team that staff receive training in the policy during their induction. It provided slides for a training session for staff on the plagiarism detection software used by the College as part of their approach to academic misconduct. The College's induction policy states that both new and returning students should receive training on academic misconduct and how to avoid it. It provides students with training on academic writing and correct referencing, where they request additional support to avoid academic misconduct.
199. The academic misconduct policy includes a clear set of definitions of different types of academic misconduct, the investigation process the College uses if staff suspect misconduct, and the potential penalties it can apply depending on the severity of the misconduct. Where staff suspect misconduct, the examiner must share a copy of the student's assessment with the management team, clearly annotated to set out where they suspect misconduct and by what means. According to the policy, the Principal interviews the individual in question, with a member of the administrative team present to keep a record of the meeting, and students can justify their work and admit or deny misconduct allegations.
200. The team did not see evidence of the policy being used in practice, but considered that the policy if implemented is fit for purpose. It has clear definitions of misconduct and a fair process for reviewing assessments and applying penalties. Teaching staff mentioned that they had identified academic misconduct in assessments and had given out penalties through the academic misconduct policy, including one case in which a student had to re-do an assessment due to a 65 per cent similarity score.

201. The student handbooks summarise the information in the academic misconduct policy. They also provide helpful guidance for students on what good academic practice looks like, including a set of principles to follow and information on the support they can get from the College, such as workshops on academic writing and information on the VLE. This as a helpful addition to the academic misconduct policy, because it provides practical steps for students to follow in order to avoid academic misconduct.
202. Student assessments go through software to detect plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, including the use of AI. Staff teach students about the software during induction and information is provided about it in the student handbook. Staff offer students the opportunity to submit a first draft of any assessment through the software before final submission. This allows students to see their plagiarism score and amend work to reduce accidental misconduct and enhance their academic practice before submitting a final assessment for marking. The final assessment also goes through the software and tutors can see the plagiarism score when assessing work. The academic misconduct policy notes that a similarity report of 20 per cent or higher is considered unacceptable, and teaching staff stated additionally that they would usually review any assessments with a score of over 15 per cent to increase the likelihood of identifying misconduct.
203. The College has a guidance document, which supplements the academic misconduct policy, setting out ways in which students might appropriately use AI in assessed work and providing advice to students on how to avoid academic misconduct related to AI. This document is helpful to students, providing clear guidance on how to use AI constructively in their work and where not to use AI. Teaching staff told the assessment team that they know the students well and believe they can identify when their assignments differ from previous seen work. In such cases they can speak to students and ask them to talk through their work to demonstrate that they understand it. This practice adds an extra, and more personalised, route through which staff can identify academic misconduct.
204. Altogether, the academic misconduct policy, the supplementary guidance for students in the handbooks and document on the use of AI, and the tutors' close knowledge of the students' work provide a thorough approach to managing academic misconduct. Feedback from students indicates that they understand what is expected of them in assessments, and they understand and actively use the plagiarism detection software through the VLE for their assessments.
205. The assessment team explored whether academic regulations are designed to ensure effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the higher education course. The team considered whether this is at risk because of previous concerns identified in the QSR about staff training for admissions. The College's academic regulations include an agreed approach to identifying proficiency in the English language during the admissions process, set out the admissions policy and accompanying flowchart. In application forms, prospective students declare whether they are an international student or speak English as a second language. Such students must submit evidence of English language proficiency through a 'Secured English Language Test'. The admissions policy, available on the College's website, specifies the required level of proficiency, with reference to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), and examples of Secured tests. The College also carries out an interview, led by the Principal, with all prospective students. The College stated that if, at interview,

English language proficiency is an issue, it asks the student to carry out an English language assessment. The interview adds an extra layer of testing to identify low English language proficiency, which is helpful for checking students have appropriate proficiency.

206. The College states in a submitted written document, and told the assessment team during the visit, that it uses the Basic and Key Skills Builder (BKSB) assessment to test English language proficiency, where it identifies the need for a student to complete an assessment. The BKSB test is not a Secured test and thus does not align with the requirement set out in the College's admissions policy for a student to complete a Secured test. Additionally, the College's admissions policy requires students to have a CEFR rating of B2, as demonstrated through a sufficient score on a Secured test. The assessment team were not able to ascertain, from information on BKSB tests available online, whether BKSB tests assess English proficiency to a high enough level for a student to demonstrate a CEFR rating of B2, as required by the College's admissions policy. This indicates that the College is not enacting the English language testing processes set out in its admissions policy and it might therefore admit students to the College's courses without appropriate proficiency in the English language.
207. The College stated that some students struggle with English language on their studies and that tutors can identify this through teaching sessions with students. It stated that it could provide support to ensure that English language difficulties do not affect their studies. The College did not state clearly how this support for students was delivered in practice.
208. The assignment briefs for assessments include a section on 'submission format' which states that assessments should be written in a 'concise style,' use structuring tools such as sub-headings and paragraphs and specifies the referencing method to be used. Some of the feedback provided to students discusses about the quality and clarity of their academic writing and references are made to students seeking support from tutors to improve their writing following their receipt of assessment feedback. This indicates that the College does include consideration of proficiency in the English language in its academic regulations related to on-course assessments.
209. The approach to English language testing, as set out in the admissions policy, would be robust if followed by the College. However, the College has stated on more than one occasion that it has used the BKSB test instead of the tests in its policy. Furthermore, the College acknowledges that some students present with English issues. Therefore, there is a risk that the College is not sufficiently ensuring students have appropriate English language proficiency to succeed in their studies at the point of admission. The College has, however, demonstrated that it considers English language proficiency through its assessments.
210. The College's complaints policy is discussed at paragraphs 179-182, under line of enquiry four. The assessment team found that the complaints policy is reasonable because it clearly sets out how a student would seek resolution for a complaint and how they could escalate their complaint, including to the OIA, should the student remain dissatisfied with the College's complaint outcome. The policy is well understood by students and staff. In relation to assessment and awards, the College has an additional policy related to academic appeals, accompanied by a form for students to use and a flowchart. The policy sets out four potential grounds for an academic appeal, including that:
- a. The assessment was conducted in breach of course regulations.

- b. The examiner's judgement was affected by personal bias.
- c. Misleading information was provided about the assessment.
- d. Individual needs for students with disabilities or additional learning needs were not met.

211. The policy also states what it considers outside the scope of academic appeals, and references how students can use the College's extenuating circumstances or complaints policies to raise other concerns. The process for academic appeals is, similar to the complaints process, managed through stages:

- Stage one: the assessor or tutors hold a discussion with the student to seek conciliation.
- Stage two: the student makes a formal appeal, via a form on the website, managed by the Director of Quality.
- Stage three (if dissatisfied with the outcome at stage two): the Director of Quality arranges an academic appeals panel, including staff members who do not teach the student in question, to review and determine the outcome of the appeal.
- Stage four: the student is given options to escalate their concerns to the OIA or awarding body if they remain unsatisfied.

The policy provides reasonable routes for escalation, and clear parameters for making and considering an academic appeal.

212. The College has not received any academic appeals since instituting the policy in the 2023-24 academic year, so the assessment team could not review how the College used the policy in practice. However, the team found that the College has enacted its complaints policy successfully. Due to the similarity in the processes for complaints and appeals, there is evidence to suggest that the College can credibly enact the appeals policy effectively. As such, students have reasonable routes to raise issues with their assessments, which makes credible the College's approach to fair and effective assessments.

213. The evidence submitted by the College included examples of assessment briefs and assessed work and academic misconduct policies, evidence from the visit, and the positive reports from the awarding body. Together these demonstrate that the College has reasonable assessment practices. It sets and marks assessments appropriately for the level of the course and provides helpful feedback for students. Staff show a good understanding of the awarding body's assessment processes and the College's academic misconduct policies. Therefore, the assessment team's view is that the College has capacity to ensure effective assessments that are valid, reliable and lead to credible awards, at present and into the future, in light of planned growth in student numbers. The team found no further concerns that risk the College's compliance with OfS conditions B4.2.a, B4.2.b, and B4.2.c.

214. The team was concerned that the College is not appropriately following its academic regulations with respect to part of its approach to effectively assess students' technical proficiency in the English language. This is because the College's stated practice in using BKSB tests at admissions does not align with the requirements set out in its admissions policy. However, the College's admissions policy, as written, includes appropriate methods to

test proficiency in the English language at admissions. The College also demonstrated that its academic regulations related to on-course assessment considered technical proficiency in the English language. This suggests that the College's academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language, as required by condition B4.2.d. However, the provider should ensure that it follows these academic regulations more effectively with respect to English language testing at admissions.

Annex A: Analysis of the quality and standards review

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) identified concerns about Anglo Skills College when it conducted a quality and standards review (QSR) in December 2021, prior to its registration with the OfS. This annex gives full detail of the analysis of the QSR, and how its findings link to the lines of enquiry and relate to the OfS's B conditions.

Concerns raised in the QSR

The QSR raised concerns that Anglo Skills College did not meet the following core practices:

Q1: The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.

Q3: The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high quality academic experience.

Q4: The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high quality academic experience.

Q6: The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

Lines of enquiry for the quality and standards assessment

The assessment team, informed by the concerns raised in the QSR, designed the following lines of enquiry to guide the assessment:

Line of enquiry 1: The capacity of the College to maintain a high quality academic experience, at present and into the future, in light of planned growth in student numbers, teaching and administrative staff numbers, and physical teaching and learning spaces.

Line of enquiry 2: The provision of physical and digital resources to ensure a high quality academic experience, at present and into the future, in light of planned growth in student numbers, teaching and administrative staff numbers.

Line of enquiry 3: The provision of a staff team that are sufficient in number and appropriately qualified to deliver a high quality academic experience, including student support, at present and into the future, in light of planned growth in student numbers.

Line of enquiry 4: Provision of routes for students to provide feedback and raise complaints or appeals in relation to their academic experience.

Line of enquiry 5: The capacity of the College to ensure effective assessments that are valid, reliable and lead to credible awards, at present and into the future, in light of planned growth in student numbers.

Table 3 shows how the assessment team identified the key points raised by the QSR in relation to each core practice, through the 'QSR finding' and 'Wording' columns. It then shows how each finding connects to OfS conditions, and how the assessment team developed the lines of enquiry for the assessment, informed by the QSR findings and relevant OfS conditions.

Table 3: Mapping of QSR findings to OfS conditions and lines of enquiry for the assessment

| QSR finding | Wording | Relates to OfS conditions | Lines of enquiry (LoE) pursued in connection with OfS conditions | | |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|---------------------|--|
| Q1 finding 1 | There are no definitive plans for staff training, including for those involved in interviewing applicants or in equality, diversity and inclusivity. | B1.3.d | LoE 1 | | |
| | | B1.3.e | | | |
| | | B2.2.a | LoE 3 | | |
| Q1 finding 1 | There are no definitive plans for staff training, including for those involved in interviewing applicants or in equality, diversity and inclusivity. | B4.2.d | LoE 5 | | |
| | | Q1 finding 2 | Some of the information for applicants is not transparent and may mislead students as to the resources available to them at the College and the nature of opportunities to progress to universities. | B2.2.a | LoE 2 |
| | | | | Q1 finding 3 | There is no evidence of plans for the management of arrangements with recruitment agencies, and staff did not demonstrate an understanding of the risks involved when using agents in recruitment. |
| Q3 finding 1 | The current and planned staff development opportunities were vaguely outlined and not suitable to the needs of delivery of higher education. The approach to staff appraisal was difficult to determine and inconsistent. | B1.3.a | LoE 1 | | |
| | | B1.3.b | | | |
| Q3 finding 2 | The regulations or policies for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support for staff do not ensure that staff are appropriately qualified and skilled. | B1.3.c | | | |
| | | B1.3.d | | | |
| | | B1.3.e | | | |
| | | B2.2.a | LoE 3 | | |
| | | B4.2.a | LoE 5 | | |
| | | B4.2.b | | | |
| | | B4.2.c | | | |

| QSR finding | Wording | Relates to OfS conditions | Lines of enquiry (LoE) pursued in connection with OfS conditions |
|---------------------|---|--|--|
| Q3 finding 3 | The team was unable to establish adequately that all staff had been recruited, appointed, inducted and supported according to the College's regulations or policies, for example in terms of the requirement that academic staff should have a teaching qualification (or be supported to achieve one). | B1.3.a B1.3.b B1.3.c B1.3.d B1.3.e | LoE 1 |
| | | B2.2.a | LoE 3 |
| | | B4.2.a B4.2.b B4.2.c | LoE 5 |
| Q3 finding 4 | The flexible nature of the staff contracts currently in use is such that the approach to staffing may lead to lack of continuity in providing sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff. The team found that senior management were unclear of any risks inherent in their staffing model and how any changes in the staffing base would be effectively managed. | B1.3.c | LoE 1 |
| | | B2.2.a | LoE 3 |
| Q4 finding 1 | The College does not have a credible formal resources strategy for the further development and maintenance of facilities and was unable to provide credible plans to develop its learning resources for its planned student numbers. | B1.3.a B1.3.d | LoE 1 |
| | | B2.2.a | LoE 2 |
| Q4 finding 2 | The student support arrangements are not adequate for the size of the planned higher education provision and although the College indicated plans to recruit additional staff, the documented staffing plans provide no information on proposed new staff roles for student support. | B2.2.a | LoE 3 |
| Q4 finding 3 | There was some lack of clarity regarding staff roles and responsibilities in supporting students. Staff do not hold specific qualifications relating to aspects of student support, and there was limited evidence that support staff have appropriate qualifications and training. | B2.2.a | LoE 3 |
| Q6 finding 1 | There are no current arrangements for recording and monitoring the outcomes of informal complaints processes. | B2.2.b | LoE 4 |

| QSR finding | Wording | Relates to OfS conditions | Lines of enquiry (LoE) pursued in connection with OfS conditions |
|---------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Q6 finding 2 | The team identified some issues with the clarity and completeness of the formal complaints procedures, including errors and discrepancies, a lack of clarity about how the complaints procedure is applied to different aspects of the student experience, incomplete detail in the appeals procedure regarding timescales, and a lack of clarity on the arrangements for escalation, with neither policy referring to Pearson and the OIAHE being referred to only in the appeals procedure. | B2.2.b | LoE 4 |
| | | B4.2.c | LoE 5 |
| Q6 finding 3 | Staff and student handbooks contain limited information, the staff handbook including information only on complaints and the student handbooks having a very brief cross-reference to the appeals procedure but no reference to complaints. | B2.2.b | LoE 4 |
| | | B4.2.c | LoE 5 |

Annex B: Ongoing conditions of registration

Condition B1: Academic experience

Scope

B1.1 This condition applies to the quality of higher education provided in any manner or form by, or on behalf of, a Provider (including, but not limited to, circumstances where a Provider is responsible only for granting awards for students registered with another Provider).

Requirement

B1.2 Without prejudice to the principles and requirements provided for by any other condition of registration and the scope of B1.1, the Provider must ensure that the students registered on each **higher education course** receive a high quality academic experience.

B1.3 For the purposes of this condition, a high quality academic experience includes but is not limited to ensuring all of the following:

- a. each higher education course is up to date;
- b. each higher education course provides educational challenge;
- c. each higher education course is coherent;
- d. each higher education course is effectively delivered; and
- e. each higher education course, as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills.

B1.4 Insofar as **relevant skills** includes technical proficiency in the English language, the Provider is not required to comply with B1.3.e to the extent that it is able to demonstrate to the OfS, on the balance of probabilities, that its English language proficiency requirements, or failure to have English language proficiency requirements, for one or more students, are strictly necessary as a matter of law because compliance with B1.3.e in respect of that student, or those students:

- i. would amount to a form of discrimination for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010; and
- ii. cannot be objectively justified for the purposes of relevant provisions of that Act; and
- iii. does not fall within an exception or exclusion provided for under or by virtue of that Act, including but not limited to provisions of the Act that relate to competence standards.

Definitions

B1.5 For the purposes of this condition B1:

- a. '**appropriately informed**' will be assessed by reference to:
 - i. the time period within which any of the developments described in the definition of **up to date** have been in existence;

- ii. the importance of any of the developments described in the definition of **up to date** to the subject matter of the **higher education course**; and
 - iii. the time period by which it is planned that such developments described in the definition of **up to date** will be brought into the **higher education course** content.
- b. 'coherent' means a higher education course which ensures:
 - i. there is an appropriate balance between breadth and depth of content;
 - ii. subjects and skills are taught in an appropriate order and, where necessary, build on each other throughout the course; and
 - iii. key concepts are introduced at the appropriate point in the course content.
- c. '**educational challenge**' means a challenge that is no less than the minimum level of rigour and difficulty reasonably expected of the **higher education course**, in the context of the subject matter and level of the course.
- d. '**effectively delivered**', in relation to a **higher education course**, means the manner in which it is taught, supervised and assessed (both in person and remotely) including, but not limited to, ensuring:
 - i. an appropriate balance between delivery methods, for example lectures, seminars,
 - ii. group work or practical study, as relevant to the content of the course; and
 - iii. an appropriate balance between directed and independent study or research, as
 - iv. relevant to the level of the course.
- e. '**higher education course**' is to be interpreted:
 - i. in accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017; and
 - ii. so as to include, for the avoidance of doubt:
 - A. a course of study;
 - B. a programme of research;
 - C. any further education course that forms an integrated part of a higher education course; and
 - D. any module that forms part of a higher education course, whether or not that module is delivered as an integrated part of the course.
- f. 'relevant skills' means:
 - i. knowledge and understanding relevant to the subject matter and level of the **higher education course**; and
 - ii. other skills relevant to the subject matter and level of the **higher education course** including, but not limited to, cognitive skills, practical skills, transferable skills and professional competences.

- g. **'up to date'** means representative of current thinking and practices in the subject matter to which the **higher education course** relates, including being **appropriately informed** by recent:
 - i. subject matter developments;
 - ii. research, industrial and professional developments; and
 - iii. developments in teaching and learning, including learning resources.

Condition B2: Resources, support and student engagement

Scope

B2.1 This condition applies to the quality of higher education provided in any manner or form by, or on behalf of, a Provider (including, but not limited to, circumstances where a Provider is responsible only for granting awards for students registered with another Provider).

Requirement

B2.2 Without prejudice to the principles and requirements provided for by any other condition of registration and the scope of B2.1, the Provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure:

- a. each **cohort of students** registered on each **higher education course** receives **resources** and **support** which are sufficient for the purpose of ensuring:
 - i. a high quality academic experience for those students; and
 - ii. those students succeed in and beyond higher education; and
- b. effective **engagement** with each **cohort of students** which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring:
 - i. a high quality academic experience for those students; and
 - ii. those students succeed in and beyond higher education.

B2.3 For the purposes of this condition, 'all reasonable steps' is to be interpreted in a manner which (without prejudice to other relevant considerations):

- a. focuses and places significant weight on:
 - i. the particular academic needs of each **cohort of students** based on prior academic attainment and capability; and
 - ii. the principle that the greater the academic needs of the **cohort of students**, the number and nature of the steps needed to be taken are likely to be more significant;
- b. places less weight, as compared to the factor described in B2.3a., on the Provider's financial constraints; and
- c. disregards case law relating to the interpretation of contractual obligations.

Definitions

B2.4 For the purposes of this condition B2:

- a. **'academic misconduct'** means any action or attempted action that may result in a student obtaining an unfair academic advantage in relation to an **assessment**, including

but not limited to plagiarism, unauthorised collaboration and the possession of unauthorised materials during an **assessment**.

- b. **'appropriately qualified'** means staff have and maintain:
 - i. expert knowledge of the subject they design and/or deliver;
 - ii. teaching qualifications or training, and teaching experience, appropriate for the content and level of the relevant **higher education course**; and
 - iii. the required knowledge and skills as to the effective delivery of their **higher education course**.
- c. **'assessment'** means any component of a course used to assess student achievement towards a **relevant award**, including an examination and a test.
- d. **'cohort of students'** means the group of students registered on to the **higher education course** in question and is to be interpreted by reference to the particular academic needs of those students based on prior academic attainment and capability.
- e. **'engagement'** means routine provision of opportunities for students to contribute to the development of their academic experience and their **higher education course**, in a way that maintains the academic rigour of that course, including, but not limited to, through membership of the Provider's committees, opportunities to provide survey responses, and participation in activities to develop the course and the way it is delivered.
- f. **'higher education course'** is to be interpreted:
 - i. in accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017; and
 - ii. so as to include, for the avoidance of doubt:
 - A. a course of study;
 - B. a programme of research;
 - C. any further education course that forms an integrated part of a higher education course; and
 - D. any module that forms part of a higher education course, whether or not that module is delivered as an integrated part of the course.
- g. **'physical and digital learning resources'** includes, as appropriate to the content and delivery of the **higher education course**, but is not limited to:
 - i. physical locations, for example teaching rooms, libraries, studios and laboratories;
 - ii. physical and digital learning resources, for example books, computers and software;
 - iii. the resources needed for digital learning and teaching, for example, hardware and software, and technical infrastructure; and
 - iv. other specialist resources, for example specialist equipment, software and research tools.
- h. **'relevant award'** means:
 - i. a **research award**;
 - ii. a **taught award**; and/or

- iii. any other type of award or qualification in respect of a **higher education course**, including an award of credit granted in respect of a module that may form part of a larger **higher education course**,
whether or not granted pursuant to an authorisation given by or under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, another Act of Parliament or Royal Charter.
- i. '**research award**' and '**taught award**' have the meanings given in section 42(3) of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.
- j. '**resources**' includes but is not limited to:
 - i. the staff team that designs and delivers a **higher education course** being collectively **sufficient in number, appropriately qualified** and deployed effectively to deliver in practice; and
 - ii. **physical and digital learning resources** that are adequate and deployed effectively to meet the needs of the **cohort of students**.
- k. '**sufficient in number**' will be assessed by reference to the principle that the larger the cohort size of students, the greater the number of staff and amount of staff time should be available to students, and means, in the context of the staff team:
 - i. there is sufficient financial resource to recruit and retain sufficient staff;
 - ii. the Provider allocates appropriate financial resource to ensuring staff are equipped to teach courses;
 - iii. **higher education courses** have an adequate number of staff, and amount of staff time; and
 - iv. the impact on students of changes in staffing is minimal.
- l. '**support**' means the effective deployment of assistance, as appropriate to the content of the **higher education course** and the **cohort of students**, including but not limited to:
 - i. academic support relating to the content of the **higher education course**;
 - ii. support needed to underpin successful physical and digital learning and teaching;
 - iii. support relating to understanding, avoiding and reporting **academic misconduct**; and
 - iv. careers support, but for the avoidance of doubt, does not include other categories of non-academic support.

Condition B4: Assessment and awards

Scope

B4.1 This condition applies to the quality of higher education provided in any manner or form by, or on behalf of, a Provider (including, but not limited to, circumstances where a Provider is responsible only for granting awards for students registered with another Provider).

Requirement

B4.2 Without prejudice to the principles and requirements provided for by any other condition of registration and the scope of B4.1, the Provider must ensure that:

- a. students are **assessed effectively**;
- b. each **assessment** is **valid** and **reliable**;
- c. **academic regulations** are designed to ensure that **relevant awards** are **credible**;
- d. subject to paragraph B4.3, in respect of each **higher education course**, **academic regulations** are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable **higher education course**; and
- e. **relevant awards** granted to students are **credible** at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.

B4.3 The Provider is not required to comply with B4.2d to the extent that:

- a. a **higher education course** is assessing a language that is not English; or
- b. the Provider is able to demonstrate to the OfS, on the balance of probabilities, that its **academic regulations**, or failure to have any **academic regulations**, for assessing technical proficiency in the English language for one or more students are strictly necessary as a matter of law because compliance with B4.2d in respect of that student, or those students:
 - i. would amount to a form of discrimination for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010; and
 - ii. cannot be objectively justified for the purposes of relevant provisions of that Act; and
 - iii. does not fall within an exception or exclusion provided for under or by virtue of that Act, including but not limited to provisions of the Act that relate to competence standards.

Definitions

B4.4 For the purposes of this condition B4:

- a. '**academic misconduct**' means any action or attempted action that may result in a student obtaining an unfair academic advantage in relation to an **assessment**, including but not limited to plagiarism, unauthorised collaboration and the possession of unauthorised materials during an **assessment**.
- b. '**academic regulations**' means regulations adopted by the Provider, which govern its **higher education courses**, including but not limited to:
 - i. the assessment of students' work;
 - ii. student discipline relating to academic matters;
 - iii. the requirements for **relevant awards**; and
 - iv. the method used to determine classifications, including but not limited to:
 - A. the requirements for an award; and
 - B. the algorithms used to calculate the classification of awards.
- c. '**assessed effectively**' means assessed in a challenging and appropriately comprehensive way, by reference to the subject matter of the **higher education course**, and includes but is not limited to:

- i. providing stretch and rigour consistent with the level of the course;
 - ii. testing **relevant skills**; and
 - iii. **assessments** being designed in a way that minimises the opportunities for **academic misconduct** and facilitates the detection of such misconduct where it does occur.
- d. **'assessment'** means any component of a course used to assess student achievement towards a **relevant award**, including an examination and a test.
- e. **'credible'** means that, in the reasonable opinion of the OfS, **relevant awards** reflect students' knowledge and skills, and for this purpose the OfS may take into account factors which include, but are not limited to:
- i. the number of **relevant awards** granted, and the classifications attached to them, and the way in which this number and/or the classifications change over time and compare with other Providers;
 - ii. whether students are **assessed effectively** and whether **assessments** are **valid** and **reliable**;
 - iii. any actions the Provider has taken that would result in an increased number of **relevant awards**, and/or changes in the classifications attached to them, whether or not the achievement of students has increased, for example, changes to assessment practices or **academic regulations**; and
 - iv. the Provider's explanation and evidence in support of the reasons for any changes in the classifications over time or differences with other Providers.
- f. **'higher education course'** is to be interpreted:
- i. in accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017; and
 - ii. so as to include, for the avoidance of doubt:
 - A. a course of study;
 - B. a programme of research;
 - C. any further education course that forms an integrated part of a higher education course; and
 - D. any module that forms part of a higher education course, whether or not that module is delivered as an integrated part of the course.
- g. **'relevant award'** means:
- i. a **research award**;
 - ii. a **taught award**; and/or
 - iii. any other type of award or qualification in respect of a **higher education course**, including an award of credit granted in respect of a module that may form part of a larger **higher education course**,
- whether or not granted pursuant to an authorisation given by or under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, another Act of Parliament or Royal Charter.
- h. **'relevant skills'** means:

- i. knowledge and understanding relevant to the subject matter and level of the **higher education course**; and
 - ii. other skills relevant to the subject matter and level of the **higher education course** including, but not limited to, cognitive skills, practical skills, transferable skills and professional competences.
- i. '**reliable**' means that an **assessment**, in practice, requires students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in a manner which is consistent as between the students registered on a **higher education course** and over time, as appropriate in the context of developments in the content and delivery of the **higher education course**.
 - j. '**research award**' and '**taught award**' have the meanings given in section 42(3) of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.
 - k. '**valid**' means that an **assessment** in fact takes place in a way that results in students demonstrating knowledge and skills in the way intended by design of the assessment.

Condition B5: Sector-recognised standards

Scope

B5.1 This condition relates to the standards applied to higher education provided in any manner or form by, or on behalf of, a provider (including, but not limited to, circumstances where a provider is responsible only for granting awards for students registered with another provider).

Requirement

B5.2 Without prejudice to the principles and requirements provided for by any other condition of registration and the scope of B5.1, the provider must ensure that, in respect of any **relevant awards** granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, the provider (whether or not the provider is the awarding body):

- a. any standards set appropriately reflect any applicable **sector-recognised standards**; and
- b. awards are only granted to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable **sector-recognised standards**.

Definitions

B5.3 For the purposes of this condition B5:

- a. '**higher education course**' is to be interpreted:
 - i. in accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017; and
 - ii. so as to include, for the avoidance of doubt:
 - A. a course of study;
 - B. a programme of research;
 - C. any further education course that forms an integrated part of a higher education course; and
 - D. any module that forms part of a higher education course, whether or not that module is delivered as an integrated part of the course.

- b. **'relevant award'** means:
- i. a **research award**;
 - ii. a **taught award**; and/or
 - iii. any other type of award or qualification in respect of a **higher education course**, including an award of credit granted in respect of a module that may form part of a larger **higher education course**,
whether or not granted pursuant to an authorisation given by or under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, another Act of Parliament or Royal Charter.
- c. **'research award'** and **'taught award'** have the meanings given in section 42(3) of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.
- d. **'sector-recognised standards'** means the standards contained in the document of that title published by the OfS from time to time.

Annex C: Abbreviations

The following table shows the meanings of abbreviations used in this document.

| Abbreviation | Meaning |
|--------------|---|
| AI | artificial intelligence |
| BKSB | Basic and Key Skills Builder |
| CEFR | Common European Framework of Reference |
| CPD | continuous professional development |
| EDI | equality, diversity and inclusion |
| FTE | full-time equivalent |
| HNC | Higher National Certificate |
| HND | Higher National Diploma |
| LoEs | lines of enquiry |
| OfS | Office for Students |
| OIA | Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education |
| QAA | Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education |
| QSR | quality and standards review |
| VLE | virtual learning environment |



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