

Office for
Students



Quality and standards review report: London Brookes College

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Executive summary

For providers seeking registration with the Office for Students (OfS), the OfS will assess a provider's application and relevant evidence to determine whether the provider satisfies the initial conditions of registration.

To conduct the quality and standards review (QSR) the OfS appointed a review team in October 2023 that consisted of two academic expert assessors. It also appointed a member of OfS staff to coordinate the review. The team was asked to give its advice and judgements about London Brookes College's (LBC) compliance with seven relevant core practices of the UK Quality Code for higher education (the quality code), which provides a reference point for quality assurance.

The report does not represent any decision of the OfS in respect of compliance with the initial conditions of registration B1, B2, B4 and B5.

1. The OfS made changes to its initial and ongoing conditions of registration relating to quality and standards on 1 May 2022.¹ However, under transitional arrangements, the registration process for providers with a live registration application between 1 March and 30 April 2022 involves a decision by the OfS about whether the provider complies with the initial conditions of registration B1, B2, B4 and B5 that were in place at the time of the provider's application, and a risk assessment in relation to the revised ongoing conditions of registration B1, B2, B4 and B5 (which would apply upon the successful registration of the provider).²
2. For providers that had a live registration application between 1 March and 30 April 2022, a QSR is normally used to provide the OfS with evidence so that it can decide whether the provider complies with the applicable initial conditions and to inform a risk assessment against ongoing conditions.
3. The previous QSR guidance produced by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) set out that in a QSR a provider would be assessed against all 13 core practices of the quality code. However, the QSRs undertaken by the OfS after 1 April 2023 only assess against seven core practices. In line with the risk-based approach in the regulatory framework and in the interests of minimising regulatory burden, the OfS took the view that it does not require a review covering all core practices of the quality code to inform its assessment of whether a provider meets the original initial conditions or whether it poses risks against the revised ongoing conditions.
4. The OfS requires all higher education providers applying to register to meet initial conditions that relate respectively to quality and to standards. It also conducts a risk assessment in relation to the revised ongoing conditions of registration B1, B2, B4 and B5 (which would apply upon the successful registration of the provider).

¹ See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/.

² See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/95ce9a26-2cd9-4181-b4a1-27b26eeacd3e/notice-of-determination-of-conditions-of-registration.pdf

5. To provide the OfS with evidence to decide whether London Brookes College complies with initial conditions and to enable a risk assessment against ongoing conditions, the OfS arranged for a QSR of LBC.
6. The team considered a range of evidence. This included information:
 - submitted to the OfS by LBC
 - gathered from LBC by the review team during its assessment
 - gathered during the review team's visit to LBC on 30 April and 1 May 2024, which included a tour of facilities, and meetings with staff, students and an external adviser.
7. Tables 1 and 2 show the conclusions reached by the review team relating to the core practices:

Table 1: Conclusions relating to core practices for standards

Standards				
Ref	Core practice	Outcome	Confidence	Summary of reasons
S1	The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.	Met	Moderate	<p>From the evidence seen, the review team considers that the threshold standards set for LBC's courses, as set out in relevant course documentation, policies and procedures, are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. This is consistent with the requirements of the relevant awarding body.</p> <p>The review team considers that academic and professional staff understand and apply LBC's approach to setting and maintaining threshold standards.</p> <p>LBC has appropriate regulations and procedures in place for higher education provision with effective leadership and oversight. It ensures that threshold standards are maintained appropriately.</p> <p>Course specifications are aligned with awarding body requirements and the descriptors of the qualification are aligned with the expectations in sector-recognised standards.</p>

Standards				
Ref	Core practice	Outcome	Confidence	Summary of reasons
				The review team's view is that that this core practice is met with a moderate degree of confidence.
S2	The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	Met	Moderate	<p>Based on the evidence considered, LBC will ensure that students who are awarded qualifications will have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level and that this is reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.</p> <p>LBC demonstrates it has a reasonable level of robust and credible policies and procedures in place to support and enable students to achieve standards beyond the threshold level for its courses.</p> <p>There is a committed and highly qualified team of academic and professional support staff, which provides confidence to the review team that the students who are awarded qualifications will have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level.</p> <p>The review team was not able to triangulate the evidence with external examiner reports, assessed work, third party endorsement and teaching observation. However, the review team considered the evidence provided to be robust and credible.</p> <p>Based on the evidence available for assessment, the review team considers that this core practice is met with a moderate degree of confidence.</p>

Table 2: Conclusions relating to core practices for quality

Quality				
Ref	Core practice	Outcome	Confidence	Summary of reasons
Q2	The provider designs and/or delivers high quality courses.	Met	Moderate	<p>Based on the evidence assessed, the review team considers that LBC designs high quality courses with a clear course structure. The requirements of the awarding body have been followed for the design of the HND business course and have been supported by a quality assurance procedure that aligns with awarding body requirements.</p> <p>The unit handbooks, assignment briefs and lesson plans of two core modules demonstrate the planned delivery structure of lessons, assessment strategy and learning outcomes are clearly aligned and are designed to support students to achieve course learning outcomes.</p> <p>The design of courses is underpinned by appropriate policies, which provide a framework to facilitate the design and delivery of high quality courses.</p> <p>Plans for timetabling were not sufficiently credible because insufficient thought had been given to teaching hours for different modules. These plans changed during the visit.</p> <p>The review team was not able to triangulate the evidence with student feedback or external verifier documentation. However, the review team considered the evidence provided to be robust and credible.</p> <p>Based on the evidence available for assessment, the review team considers that this core practice is met with a moderate degree of confidence.</p>

Quality				
Ref	Core practice	Outcome	Confidence	Summary of reasons
Q3	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high quality academic experience.	Met	High	<p>Based on the evidence reviewed the review team concludes that LBC has appropriately qualified and skilled staff who possess appropriate qualifications and experience to deliver a high quality academic experience across the range of topics required in the course it intends to deliver.</p> <p>LBC has credible, robust and evidence based plans for ensuring it has sufficient staff to deliver its planned courses based on its projected maximum student numbers of 30. LBC recruits, appoints, inducts and supports staff appropriately, which adds to the credibility of its plans to deliver a high quality academic experience.</p> <p>The review team was not able to triangulate the evidence with observations of learning and teaching, or with student feedback because LBC has not yet delivered the course. However, the review team considered the robustness and credibility of the evidence provided to be strong.</p> <p>Based on the evidence assessed, the review team conclude that this core practice is met with a high degree of confidence.</p>
Q4	The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high quality academic experience.	Met	Low	<p>Based on the evidence considered, the review team concludes that LBC's strategies and plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are generally credible, realistic and linked to the delivery of successful academic outcomes for students, with particularly strong information on support services.</p>

Quality				
Ref	Core practice	Outcome	Confidence	Summary of reasons
				<p>Staff understand their roles in providing these services and existing students regard the facilities, learning resources and student support services as sufficient and appropriate and that they deliver a high quality academic experience.</p> <p>The LBC building, and the teaching space therein, is sufficient for delivery for the 30 students currently permitted by Pearson. However, it is not clear it would be sufficient for the short-term growth target of 50 students as other rooms, currently used for Level 3 provision, would have to be used and it is not clear whether these groups could be relocated. Therefore, plans for teaching room capacities were not sufficiently credible.</p> <p>Based on the evidence assessed, the review team agreed that this core practice is met with a low degree of confidence.</p>
Q5	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.	Met	High	<p>Based on the evidence reviewed, the review team considers that LBC has robust and credible plans to actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. These are set out in detail in appropriate policies and include multiple planned opportunities for feedback on all areas of the higher education experience through different mechanisms. The team also saw evidence of how LBC engages further education students.</p> <p>Based on the evidence assessed, the review team agreed that this core practice is</p>

Quality				
Ref	Core practice	Outcome	Confidence	Summary of reasons
				met with a high degree of confidence.
Q9	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Met	High	<p>Based on the evidence considered, the review team's view is that LBC has comprehensive, robust and credible plans to support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.</p> <p>LBC's student support policies are designed to facilitate successful academic and professional outcomes and have worked successfully with further education students. The same approach will be used for higher education students and should be effective. Staff working in this area understand their responsibilities and their commitment to student outcomes. Further education students report that LBC adequately supports them to succeed.</p> <p>Based on the evidence assessed, the review team agreed that this core practice is met with a high degree of confidence.</p>

Introduction and background

Context

8. Founded in 2008, LBC is an independent provider that currently offers a range of IGCSE and A-level courses. It is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. It is not linked to any other organisations. In the academic year 2023-24 it had a total of 56 students. Of these, 41 were studying for A-levels and 15 were studying for GCSEs. It had no higher education students in 2023-24.
9. LBC's mission is to provide high quality educational provision that is tailored to the needs of its learner community. It aims to offer both academic and vocational courses that will help students to succeed in a rapidly changing world. It looks to provide a learning environment where any student from any background can succeed. It seeks to achieve this by providing tailored support, including small class sizes. This approach will be extended to its higher education provision.
10. LBC is located in northwest London, in the area of Hendon. Its campus consists of a grade-two listed building: Burroughs House.
11. LBC intends to launch a BTEC Higher National Diploma (HND) in business in September 2024. The awarding body for this qualification is Pearson Education Limited, which in February 2024 gave approval for LBC to deliver the course until 31 August 2026, with a certification end date of 31 August 2029. This approval has an initial registration capacity of 20 learners per academic year, with a default maximum of 50 per cent growth per year. At the time of the review, LBC was approved to recruit 30 students per academic year. LBC intended to apply to Pearson to increase its registration capacity to 50 students in May 2024.
12. Pearson originally approved LBC to deliver Higher National Certificates (HNCs) and HNDs at Levels 4 and 5 respectively in 2020. It also authorised LBC to deliver Higher Nationals in business in 2021. However, approval for these courses lapsed due to inactivity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
13. LBC is applying for registration in the Approved category of the OfS Register. This is because it intends for qualifying persons on qualifying courses to access student support up to the basic amount. LBC's registration application confirms that it does not intend to apply for degree awarding powers at this time. At the review visit, the senior leadership team expressed plans to establish a partnership, to deliver a top-up course with a university in the future. They confirmed that they were in discussions with two providers.
14. The board of governors is described as the senior decision-making body for LBC. Its terms of reference state that it is LBC's legal authority, principal financial business authority, and employing authority for all staff. Its membership includes external advisers, senior managers, directors and a chair.
15. The board of directors is described as senior executive decision-making body for LBC and is accountable for compliance with regulatory requirements. Its terms of reference state that its role is to advise and guide the chief executive officer on the design and delivery of LBC's

strategy, and how to efficiently and effectively manage the college. Its members include the directors of LBC and senior managers who report directly to the chief executive officer.

16. The board of governors hold the board of directors and senior management team to account in relation to LBC's performance against its stated targets, including compliance with regulatory requirements. It is of note then that directors and senior managers sit on the board of governors. The board of governors also employs the principal, as the head of LBC. The principal is responsible for academic leadership and oversight. The board of governors is accountable to LBC to fulfil its mandate and responsibilities. The chair of the board of governors is as an independent external member elected by the board of governors.
17. The academic board reports directly to the board of governors. It is responsible for maintaining academic standards and the quality of education, and for LBC's academic policies and procedures. It is chaired by the principal. From May 2024 it is intended that an audit risk management and remuneration committee will also report to the board of governors. Its responsibilities will relate to finances, sustainability and risk.
18. Several committees report to the academic board. These include:
 - an academic planning committee, responsible for assessment-related activities and decisions
 - an ethics committee, which examines ethical concerns arising from student research or ethical dilemmas in teaching
 - a programme committee, established for the HND business course to ensure academic quality and standards, and promote effective student engagement
 - a quality assurance and enhancement committee, which ensures that internal quality assurance mechanisms align with the quality code and satisfy the expectations of students, its awarding body and other stakeholders. Compliance with OfS conditions of registration is not specifically mentioned but its terms of reference state that the committee will ensure that LBC's quality assurance and enhancement policies fulfil the requirements of relevant external agencies
 - a student representatives' committee, which will provide a platform for students to talk about their education experiences. The student representative committee will operate from September 2024.
19. The review team noted the number of committees that reported to the academic board relative to the size of the provider and the amount of higher education provision being provided. While the structure appeared overly complex, and possibly ineffective in relation to staff time and resources, the review team concluded that there was no evidence that this would have a negative impact on the quality of education provided.
20. The 2023 to 2028 strategic plan for LBC lists seven areas of strategic focus. These are:
 - higher education provision; introducing at least two HND courses and successfully registering in the approved category of the OfS Register

- access and success of students facing equality of opportunity; work with local schools and colleges to attract learners from disadvantaged backgrounds
- student experience: engage students and provide them with individualised formative learning experiences
- staff training and development; enhance the capabilities, standards and adaptabilities of staff
- teaching and learning; broaden higher education access for students with the capability and enthusiasm to succeed
- governance: ensure that LBC's governance arrangements are robust and meet the corporate and academic governance expectations of its stakeholders
- finance and sustainability; maintain its financial position so that it can sustain and enhance the student experience and achieve long-term growth and sustainability.

21. From September 2024 the intended listing of higher education courses offered and planned student numbers are as follows:

Course	Level	Awarding body	Location of study	Student numbers (full-time)	Student numbers (part-time)
BTEC HND Business	5	Pearson Education Ltd	London	30	0

22. Initially LBC intends to deliver one BTEC HND course in business. Currently Pearson approves LBC to recruit 30 new learners in total per academic year to the course. LBC is making a registration threshold increase request to Pearson which would enable it to recruit up to 50 students during the 2024-25 academic year. In the medium term, LBC plans to expand its higher education provision by delivering a second Pearson approved HND course, possibly in computing, by 2027-28. LBC plans to undertake research to determine the demand for different subject areas to inform which additional course it will run.

Assessment process

Information gathering

23. The review team gathered a range of information to determine whether LBC met the seven relevant core practices. The assessment was conducted according to the process set out in the OfS's QSR guidance for providers applying to register with the Office for Students ('the guidance').
24. The review team used information from LBC's QSR submission, from an initial and subsequent information request, and from a site visit undertaken on 30 April and 1 May 2024.
25. During the site visit the review team met with:
- a range of staff, including academic and support staff, and senior staff

b. further education students.

26. The review team was guided in its approach by Annex D of the guidance.
27. Annex D of the guidance expects review teams to sample certain types of key evidence. At the point of review, LBC was not yet running any higher education courses. Therefore, the review team did not undertake sampling.
28. The review team could not consider the views of higher education students and there was no student submission, internal and external surveys, and module and course evaluations. However, the review team met a group of further education students during the visit to understand their experience of the facilities and student support currently provided by LBC.

Explanation of findings

Core practice S1

The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.

29. To meet this core practice a provider must ensure that threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks. The threshold standards for its qualifications must be articulated clearly and must be met, or exceeded, through the delivery of the qualification and the assessment of students.
30. The sector-recognised standards that are used in relation to this core practice are those that apply in England, as defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework published in 2018 (OfS 2018.01). That is, those set out in Table 1, in paragraphs 4.10, 4.12, 4.15, 4.17, 4.18, in paragraphs 6.13-6.18 and in the Table in Annex C, in the version of The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications for UK Degree Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) 2014. These sector-recognised standards that apply for this review represent the threshold academic standards for each level of the FHEQ and the minimum volumes of credit typically associated with qualifications at each level.
31. The review team completed an assessment of this core practice in line with the principles and outcomes set out in the guidance.

What the evidence shows

32. LBC intends to deliver a BTEC HND in business, awarded by Pearson. To understand the split of responsibilities between Pearson and LBC the team considered the Pearson responsibilities checklist. This sets out that Pearson is responsible for setting standards and ensuring that the HND business course is consistent with the FHEQ at Levels 4 and 5 and is therefore aligned with sector-recognised standards. LBC is responsible for the maintenance of standards through content, curriculum and assessment design, marking and moderation processes. Pearson expects LBC to have quality assurance processes in place to ensure standards are maintained, including the appointment and use of external examiners. These expectations are set out in the BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment (2023-24).
33. To test whether threshold standards for its courses are consistent with national qualifications frameworks and meet the sector-recognised standards in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework the review team examined the following documents:
 - Pearson BTEC higher nationals business specification 2021 (Pearson specification)
 - LBC's approved HND business programme specification (LBC specification).
34. The Pearson specification sets out information about qualification titles, learning outcomes and volumes of credit that are consistent with Level 4 and 5 of nationally recognised frameworks (FHEQ and the Regulated Qualifications Framework) and therefore sector-

recognised standards. For example, the HND has a credit volume of 240 of which 120 are at Level 4 and 120 are at Level 5. The LBC specification strictly follows the Pearson specification in these areas, with the qualification title, learning outcomes, and credit volume all matching those listed in the Pearson specification.

35. The LBC HND business course is designed to enable learners to enhance their skills and understanding in various business-related areas, including management, human resources, marketing, international marketing, and finance and facilitates a deeper comprehension of the challenges associated with managing culturally diverse organisations. The LBC course learning outcomes cover areas including knowledge and understanding, cognitive skills, applied skills and transferable skills. These mirror the areas in the Pearson specification, which are mapped against the FHEQ Level 5 descriptors. Programme outcome KU1 of the LBC HND business course is 'Knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and practices of the contemporary global business environment'. This can be mapped to the FHEQ Level 5 descriptor 'knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed'. Similarly, programme learning outcomes AS4 is 'Develop outcomes for clients/businesses using appropriate business practices and data to make justified recommendations'. This can be mapped to the FHEQ Level 5 descriptor 'Ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context'.
36. The LBC learning outcomes are also tailored to the local needs and context of the college. They aim to focus on: developing learners' knowledge and understanding of business and the related areas such as finance and human resources which are important to the local needs and context of LBC. This maps with the descriptor for a higher education qualification at Level 5 on the FHEQ Foundation degree. These qualifications are awarded to students who have demonstrated:
 - 'knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed'
 - an 'ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context'
 - 'knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study
 - 'An understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analysis and interpretations based on that knowledge.'
37. The team concludes that the approved LBC specification demonstrates that threshold standards are consistent with national qualification frameworks and sector-recognised standards.
38. The student handbook details the academic regulations that are specific to the LBC HND business programme. It includes the learning outcomes for each module (henceforth described as units) and demonstrates that the HND business course is consistent with the

qualification descriptors of Level 5 of the FHEQ and sector-recognised standards. The course requirements listed in the student handbook align to the Pearson qualification specification. They state that:

- Level 4 students must complete units totalling 120 credits, with at least 105 credits at a pass grade or higher
- Level 5 students must complete units totalling 120 credits with at least 105 credits at a pass grade or higher
- a student is eligible for a compensation if: a student completes the course but does not pass one 15 credit unit at Level 4 and if the student attempted the assessment but did not pass one 15 credit unit at Level 5
- core units are included in both compensation provisions. In both cases the students must complete and pass all other required units according to Pearson's unit rules of combination for the HNC or HND qualifications.

39. The review team found the compensation provision is compatible with other UK higher education providers because it is common to allow students to choose alternative units for referral assessment if they have passed all core units. In other words, there is flexibility for students to choose optional units for their referral assessment. Students who do not achieve sufficient credits for an HND award will receive a unit credit certificate for the units they have passed. This aligns with Pearson's HND business specification and the approach is comparable to those of other UK providers.
40. To understand how LBC designs programmes, the team considered the Pearson specification and the LBC specification. The Pearson specification details the mandatory core and specialist units that must be completed as part of the HND business qualification, as well as optional units available. It states that at Level 4, 30 credits can come from optional units and at Level 5, 75 credits may come from optional and specialist units, with only one specialist unit coming from each specialist grouping. LBC has adhered to the awarding body requirements in its selection of core and optional units. For example, there are two optional units at Level 4 totalling 30 credits. Additionally, LBC has selected optional units that are contextualised for delivery at LBC in light of its research on market and local needs.
41. The review team considered the programme design and approval policy to understand how LBC designs programmes, assessment design and marking and moderation to ensure threshold standards are met. This describes the framework LBC will adopt to design and develop qualifications. It also describes the revalidation and monitoring and evaluation process. The course proposal is designed by the programme management team and approved by the academic planning committee. The pre-course approval documentation would include the proposal, programme specification, an example assessment brief for a core unit, and sample internal verification forms for assessments.
42. LBC's programme approval process aligns with the requirement of the awarding body. The BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment 2023-2024, states that the programme approval process requires a programme leader to support the whole programme team in understanding higher-level assessment standards. LBC is expected to use materials provided by the awarding body which define and exemplify

assessment requirements, such as specifications. There is a programme leader at LBC who is expected to plan each assessment and ensure they are authorised by the internal verifier. This process is designed to ensure that assessments are fit-for-purpose, valid, will deliver reliable assessment outcomes across assessors, and is internally verified before use for teaching purposes.

43. These processes ensure proposed programmes, and their assessment plans are scrutinised at multiple stages. The College's internal programme development team, led by the head of higher education, begins the development process. Each programme then progresses through several stages of internal approval, receiving feedback from external experts. They are further approved by LBC's college-level committees, such as the academic planning committee and the academic board. These processes follow the requirements of the awarding body to ensure a sound and robust process to maintain threshold standards. Through this approach LBC has appropriately set the threshold standard of the HND business course aligned with the awarding body guidance and followed a rigorous approval procedure. It demonstrates that LBC has clear and comprehensive academic regulations and frameworks to support the setting and maintenance of academic standards in the design and approval of qualifications, at the relevant threshold level.
44. To identify LBC's approach to ensuring threshold standards, the review team considered documents that set out LBC's responsibilities and how it ensures alignment with Pearson requirements. Academic regulations are detailed in the quality assurance handbook and the student handbook. More detailed policies supplement and support these regulations, including the assessment and internal verification policy, the academic malpractice policy and procedure, the learner guidance and support policy, the programme design and approval policy, and the responding to external examiner report template.
45. The assessment and internal verification policy sets out LBC's process to ensure quality, validity, and reliability of student assessment. It also provides guidance to staff engaged in the planning, delivery, and assessment for HND business students. The policy incorporates the FHEQ level descriptors, which ensures that the threshold standards are met and maintained. The academic malpractice policy and procedure outlines LBC's approach and procedures for addressing academic misconduct and measures for preventing it. The procedure for addressing suspected academic misconduct includes three recommendations:
 - a. recommending that the case be treated as a major violation
 - b. recommending that the case be treated as a minor violation
 - c. or dismissing the case entirely.
46. Measures for prevention include making the policy and potential consequences clear to students at induction and in the course handbook. Implementing the academic malpractice policy and procedure also ensures that threshold standards are maintained through preventative and corrective measures for dealing with academic malpractice. This also means that only students who appropriately demonstrate they meet threshold standards can receive awards.
47. To test that staff understand and apply LBC's approach to setting and maintaining threshold standards, the review team met with a range of senior, academic and professional staff. The

senior leadership team has appointed a higher education management team and higher education academic staff with extensive management and teaching experience for higher education courses. Academic staff demonstrated a detailed knowledge of the awarding body's expectations and requirements for the delivery of the HND business course. For example, they explained LBC's policies and procedures for maintaining and reviewing academic standards, and linked these to activities such as course design and delivery, marking, moderation, annual monitoring and quality enhancement. Their explanations align with the responsibilities of the provider, as set out in the responsibilities checklist and the BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment (2023-24). The review team concluded that staff understand and apply the approach to setting and maintaining standards.

48. The senior leadership team and the higher education management team informed the review team that LBC considers staff development a key tool for ensuring staff understand and can guarantee that threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualification's frameworks. LBC has a staff development fund to support staff to seek formal teaching qualifications and has a mentoring system to develop less experienced staff. LBC uses multiple communication channels, such as committee meetings, weekly meetings, and open-door policy discussions, to ensure staff clearly understand and are informed of the awarding body's expectations on threshold standards, including relevant changes to these standards. The professional staff also discussed their role and responsibilities, such as co-ordinating internal verification, to ensure the threshold standards for the HND Business is consistent with the national qualification frameworks. The review team considered that the good understanding of staff of the national qualification frameworks will help ensure LBC maintains the threshold standards for its qualifications and that they are consistent with relevant national qualifications frameworks.

Conclusions

49. From the evidence seen, the review team concludes that LBC will ensure that the threshold standards set for the HND business course will be consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks because its processes are appropriately aligned with its awarding body's requirements, which align in turn with relevant threshold standards. LBC's academic regulations and frameworks are sufficiently comprehensive and clear to support the setting and maintenance of academic standards at the relevant threshold level. Staff demonstrated that they understood and can apply LBC's approach to setting and maintaining academic standards.

Core practice S2

The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

50. To meet this core practice a provider must ensure that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The threshold standards for its qualifications must be articulated clearly and must be met, or exceeded, through the delivery of the qualification and the assessment of students.
51. The sector-recognised standards that are used in relation to this core practice are those that apply in England, as defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS' regulatory framework published in 2018 (OfS 2018.01). That is, those set out in Table 1, in paragraphs 4.10, 4.12, 4.15, 4.17, 4.18, in paragraphs 6.13-6.18 and in the Table in Annex C, in the version of The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications for UK Degree Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) 2014. These sector-recognised standards that apply for this review represent the threshold academic standards for each level of the FHEQ and the minimum volumes of credit typically associated with qualifications at each level.
52. The review team completed an assessment of this core practice in line with the principles and outcomes set out in the guidance.

What the evidence shows

53. To test whether LBC has clear and comprehensive academic regulations and assessment frameworks the review team considered:
 - programme design and approval policy and procedure
 - learning and teaching strategy
 - assessment and internal verification policy
 - learner guidance and support policy.
54. The review team also reviewed the LBC HND business course specification as it is the definitive programme document for the HND business course. The LBC course specification describes the course aims, learning objectives, assessment strategy, and support and guidance available to students on assessment. The review team reviewed assignment briefs for human resources management and business and the business environment units. The assignment briefs state the learning outcomes, and the transferable skills related to the assignment. The assignment briefs provide information about the assignment activities and guidance, which address different unit learning outcomes, and recommend resources to students. The assignment criteria also state what is expected of students to achieve standards beyond the threshold level, which they articulate as distinction, merit and pass for each of the assessed learning outcomes.

55. The assessment and internal verification policy provides guidance for staff engaged in the planning, delivery, and assessment of learning on the HND business programme. A lead internal verifier coordinates the process and all internal verifiers and assessors are involved. The policy includes a robust approach to marking and standardisation which should ensure that assignment briefs are set at the appropriate standard and that marking is credible, robust and consistent. LBC requires academics and internal verifiers to attend mandatory standardisation and moderation meetings which enable them to understand and apply LBC's approach to setting and maintaining standards. It requires assessors to engage in mock marking of sample and exemplar learner work against criteria for the given unit and gives them feedback after each session. The review team considered this a part of LBC's staff development for assessors that enables them to further understand the expectations of marking and apply this to support learners to achieve beyond threshold standards. Standardisation sessions take place before any formal assessment is conducted, to ensure staff will be assessing to the same standard. There are then termly mandatory internal verification meetings to ensure a consistent interpretation of assessment criteria. The same process is repeated for marking.
56. The review team met with the senior leadership team, higher education management team and higher education academics. They confirmed that LBC plans a rigorous process to ensure consistency and quality in unit design and delivery whereby internal verifiers will provide feedback to academic staff on the draft assessment brief at the beginning of each semester. The academic responsible for that assessment will then revise it accordingly. External examiners will moderate internally verified assignments. However, the review team could not triangulate the claims with evidence as, at the time of the visit, the course was not yet being delivered. There is not yet any marked and moderated work which the team can review.
57. The learner guidance and support policy states the support, advice and guidance provided for students. It is intended that teaching and learning staff provide regular, constructive feedback to learners and provide comprehensive advice on progression opportunities. Teaching and learning staff also plan to offer drop-in sessions and organise study skills training and academic writing workshops for students. Through providing the learning support and constructive feedback to learners, LBC plans to ensure that students can achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.
58. To test whether standards specified in definitive course documentation beyond the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers the review team considered:
- unit handbooks for human resource management and business and the business environment
 - assignment briefs for human resource management and business and the business environment
 - lesson plans for human resource management and business and the business environment.

59. The handbooks follow the unit descriptor example in the Pearson specification. The scheme of work states the weekly teaching topic and how these align to learning outcomes. The unit learning outcomes map against the course learning outcome.
60. The review team considered the assignment briefs for human resource management and business and the business environment units. Both assignment briefs clearly state the assignment activities and how they address unit learning outcomes. It is clear that staff have designed and set assignments at an appropriate level and clear guidance is provided for students on what is required for them to demonstrate achievement beyond the threshold standard. The assignment briefs sampled also provide recommended resources to guide students in conducting further research for the assignment. The review team found the assessment criteria for assignments are clear about the learning outcome requirements for a pass, merit or distinction.
61. To test that marks and awards that will be given to students will be reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, the review team considered the college's plans for marking and moderation. The assessment and internal verification policy states the principles for the design of assessment and expects those designing assessment to consider inclusivity. The key principles of marking include:
- content and argument
 - research material
 - structure
 - style
 - clarity
 - the overall presentation of the assignment, such as grammar, spelling and structure.
62. The policy expects staff to use anonymous marking to mitigate the risk of assessment bias, and to provide assessment feedback to the students within four weeks. The feedback must adhere to key marking principles, relate directly to each assessment criterion, and clearly link to the intended learning outcomes. As such, LBC plans that the feedback will be designed to help students achieve above and beyond the threshold level. The policy expects that feedback will identify the submission's strengths and the areas of required improvement. It also expects that assessors offer guidance on how students can enhance future or revised submissions, specifically addressing each assessment criterion, which includes elucidating how to accomplish any missing criteria. The policy expects assessors also to include observations on spelling and grammar where relevant. Furthermore, the assessors may annotate student submissions to pinpoint specific areas of concern and highlight the key points that need attention for further improvement.
63. Marking will go through internal and external verification processes led by the lead internal verifier and supported by internal verifiers. The process aims to ensure assessors clearly evaluate whether the submitted assignment meets the assessment outcomes and criteria for standards at and above the threshold and to provide feedback to learners. There is a standardisation process in place, and this is discussed at paragraph 55. The outcome and

actions from internal verification are signed off by the lead internal verifier and the verification records are kept and made available for external verification purposes. The external verification process involves a Pearson appointed individual to assess whether the marking is consistent across the cohort and aligned with the Pearson descriptors. An external examiner report is then produced and shared with LBC.

64. Procedures planned for responding to the HND business external examiner's report state that the report would first be reviewed by the programme team to identify if there are any immediate issues. It will then be considered by relevant academic committees. This could include the programme committee, student representative committee or the quality assurance and enhancement committee. Recommendations for how to respond to the report would then be made to the academic board. Programme leaders are expected to prepare formal responses to external examiners, and plan actions to respond to their reports. This action plan would be approved by the academic board. A template for responding to external examiners states the areas which the response must cover, including action points from the last report, good practice identified, a summary of essential actions and summary of recommendations. For each of the areas, the template allows for the inclusion of the external examiner's comment, LBC's response, a response from the responsible person and the deadline to complete the actions. These plans for the external verification of standards will enable LBC to seek assurance and feedback on whether standards achieved beyond the threshold level have been set and maintained in a way comparable to other UK providers.
65. To test that staff understand and apply LBC's approach to setting and maintaining comparable standards, the review team met the higher education programme management team and higher education teaching staff. This meeting explored their understanding of processes and procedures for updating the learning materials and assessment strategies to ensure they are continuously relevant and valid. The team also discussed LBC's robust procedure on marking, internal and external moderation, and how it aligns with the awarding body's requirements, as well as LBC's intention to exceed the awarding body's expectations to deliver high quality courses. They discussed their practice of adopting the awarding body's course materials, such as unit descriptors and teaching resources. The staff also discussed how they enhance these by adding case studies and using online resources to enhance student learning that should further enable students to achieve beyond the threshold level.

Conclusions

66. From the evidence seen, the review team concludes that LBC will ensure that students who are awarded qualifications will have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. LBC has taken reasonable steps to ensure:
 - sufficiently detailed policies and procedures are in place that articulate to students the standards that can be attained beyond the threshold level
 - that they have plans through their teaching approach and assessment feedback to help students understand how to achieve standards beyond the threshold level
 - that there is support for those involved in assessment to assess against criteria beyond the threshold accurately and consistently.

67. LBC follows the awarding body's guidance on course design and development and its associated quality assurance procedures. The teaching team have enhanced the teaching materials provided by the awarding body by adding additional materials such as case studies. The review team was unable to test the effectiveness of LBC's policies because LBC was not delivering the course when the review took place. Overall, based on its scrutiny of the evidence provided, the team concludes that this core practice is met.

Core practice Q2

The provider designs and/or delivers high quality courses

What the evidence shows

68. To identify LBC's approach to designing and delivering high quality courses, the review team reviewed:
- BTEC higher nationals business specification
 - BTEC higher nationals centre guide to quality assurance and assessment 2023-24
 - the programme design and approval policy
 - the teaching and learning strategy
 - the assessment and internal verification policy
 - the procedure for dealing with the HND Business external examiner report.
69. Within the Pearson's HND business qualification framework and in line with its rules of combination, LBC can design its own course by selecting appropriate units to deliver within specified parameters. Pearson provides a BTEC Higher Nationals Business Specification 2021 and the BTEC Higher Nationals Centre Guide to Quality Assurance and Assessment 2023-24. The former states the guidance and expectations of the course structure, quality assurance and assessment required for approved courses. It also provides a standard unit specification template, including information relating to the quality assurance procedure, the unit structure and assessment design.
70. LBC's programme design and approval policy and procedure provides a framework, starting from the development of a course proposal through to final approval by the academic board. It contains the necessary elements that the review team would expect to see for the effective design and delivery of a high quality course. This includes: a robust review of course proposals at various levels and at various points of development, new and existing courses meeting essential criteria, and processes for revalidation, monitoring and evaluation. The review team noted that the processes for revalidation and monitoring are commonly used in the higher education sector to ensure continual quality enhancement of courses. The policy itself is also reviewed annually. Procedures and processes are also differentiated between how it intends to design Pearson courses and university-validated courses.
71. The process for initiating a new programme in LBC begins with discussion with the senior management team and is followed with a formal proposal submitted to the academic planning committee. Proposed programmes must fulfil essential criteria, including market demand, progression routes alignment, job sector demand, alignment with the LBC's strategy and mission, and the availability of necessary resources. New programme proposals must include a justification or business case outlining:
- market research demonstrating the demand for the programme

- a statement on learning resources available or required
 - projections of student enrolment for the first three full academic years
 - feedback from current students, collected through the Student Representatives Committee
 - curricula vitae of proposed teaching staff.
72. There is a designated stakeholder or committee at LBC responsible for checking and approving documentation at each stage of the course approval process. The academic planning committee assesses the course proposal and, if deemed suitable, submits it to the academic board for preliminary endorsement. If endorsed, the head of higher education is instructed to establish a programme development team, potentially including members of the awarding organisation, to engage with employers, student representatives, external advisers, and the head of employability and prepare documents for an internal pre-validation panel meeting. This meeting is led by a member of the senior leadership team and includes student representatives, and external experts.
73. Next, the academic planning committee reviews the pre-validation documents, which include:
- the programme specification
 - staff CVs
 - resource planning
 - three-year projections
 - IT equipment and resource requirements for developing of teaching materials
 - an example assessment brief for a core unit
 - sample internal verification forms for assessments.
74. If approved, the documents will be submitted to the awarding body, which convenes a validation panel. Throughout the process the academic planning committee supervises preparations for the pre-validation meeting and the validation panel. The head of higher education is responsible for ensuring the expectations of the awarding body are met. The programme development team will seek final approval from the academic board once all developmental stages are completed. This includes demonstrating adherence to scrutiny criteria and incorporating feedback from external sources and students.
75. All taught programmes at LBC undergo a revalidation process by their respective awarding bodies, potentially leading to modifications in programme specifications. Modifications to programme specifications may arise from recommendations of the quinquennial review or guidance from the academic board. The re-validation scope includes a catalogue of new units LBC intends to introduce, identification of additional resources required for the delivery of the revalidated programme, amendments to the current teaching strategy, adjustments to the assessment strategy and revisions to the timetabling arrangements, including total teaching hours.

76. The programme design and approval policy is reviewed and approved by the academic board on an annual basis. Programmes validated by Pearson are subject to an annual monitoring review while a quinquennial review is conducted every five years. Internal and external feedback, including student feedback surveys, course performance and evaluation reports, unit evaluation and performance reports, are reviewed by the quality assurance and enhancement committee so there is a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of course design and development processes.
77. The review team found LBC has a credible and robust plan to support the design and development of a high quality course. The programme design and approval policy provides a framework for ensuring that the important elements for maintaining high quality courses, such as staff, resources, course design and assessment design are reviewed before the course can be approved for delivery. It also includes established processes for continued monitoring that will allow for continual quality enhancement of courses.
78. The teaching and learning strategy states the principles LBC adopts to promote a high quality learning experience for students, and covers developing relevant teaching and learning content, supporting and developing teaching staff, strengthening teaching quality and encouraging innovation in learning and teaching. The activities described to support these principles should support LBC to deliver high quality courses. For example, supporting and development teaching staff will involve implementing a staff development policy that ensures all academic staff engage in training and development opportunities. These include professional qualifications, continuing professional development, and obtaining Higher Education Academy (HEA) fellowship accreditation. Strengthening teaching quality will include the review of learning and teaching practices and the implementation of feedback mechanisms.
79. LBC has academic policies and procedures to support the design and delivery of courses. For example, the assessment and internal verification policy provides guidance on planning, delivery, and assessment of learning of the HND business course. This policy states clearly the principles of assessment and therefore indicates planning for a robust and credible approach to assessment design; it provides a structured process for academic staff to receive feedback on their assessment design. This can be used to inform the ongoing design and development of the course, which can enhance its quality.
80. The procedure for considering the HND business external examiner report, as described in paragraph 64, supports the design and delivery of high quality courses. It provides the mechanism for internal and external scrutiny of the assessment brief and marking. It is also a source of assessment moderation feedback for academic staff, which they can use to improve the quality of the assignment, and, in turn, enhance the quality of courses. LBC plans to ensure that students can access external examiner reports through a range of mechanisms, including via the student representative, and LBC's virtual learning environment (VLE). The review team found that LBC plans a robust approach on external verification to ensure assessments are developed and assessed appropriately.
81. To assess whether LBC has credible and robust plans for delivering high quality courses the review team considered:
- the draft quality assurance handbook

- the student handbook
- minutes of the quality assurance and enhancement committee
- the access and participation statement
- the HND business course teaching timetable September – December 2024
- the updated HND business timetable.

82. The review team found that the draft quality assurance handbook articulates LBC's plans and processes on designing and delivering high quality courses through rigorous quality assurance procedures, which involves multiple stages of internal verification of assignments, and academic staff development. It also includes guidelines for teaching observation. The purpose of teaching observation at LBC is to improve teaching quality and refine the teaching skills of lecturers. An observer will meet with the lecturer in advance to understand the session's objectives, content, and methods, learn how the class fits within the broader unit aims, discuss specific areas for feedback, and address any concerns about the observation process. During the observation the observer will consider whether:

- the session has a clear introduction and summary
- the session learning outcomes are linked to course aims
- the teaching methods are suitable for the set objectives
- the delivery, pace and content are appropriate, accurate and current
- students have opportunities to participate and engage in class
- learning resources, facilities and equipment are used appropriately, including a consideration of health and safety
- student diversity is respected and additional needs are addressed appropriately.

83. This information is captured in a lecturer observation form and feedback is provided on a confidential basis. The aim is to provide it within a week. As part of the post-teaching observation feedback, lecturers will draft an individual development action plan to address any required actions. They integrate this into their professional development for the staff appraisal process, which can further enhance their capacity to develop high quality courses. The review team found that the feedback which lecturers received from teaching observation can support them to develop and deliver high quality courses.

84. The draft quality assurance handbook also details the governance structure for LBC, including responsibility for course design and delivery. More information on the governance structure is detailed in paragraphs 14 to 19. The academic board is responsible for upholding academic standards and the delivery of courses and it reports to the board of governors. A number of committees report to the academic board, including the quality assurance and enhancement committee and the academic planning committee. There is evidence of discussion of the planning and development of the HND business programme in both the academic planning committee minutes and quality assurance and enhancement committee

minutes. The latter recorded a discussion on the development of relevant course templates suitable for the HND business course, discussions on the appropriateness of the design of the assignment briefs, and a recommendation to adopt Pearson's template for the assignment briefs to ensure uniformity.

85. The review team considered assignment briefs for two core modules: human resource management and business and the business environment. The assignment briefs use the Pearson template. This ensures unit template information required by Pearson is included in module assignment briefs and that there is uniformity across assignment briefs. Finally, using a standard unit template for all units in the HND business course can ensure information is presented to students consistently, which helps them to understand relevant unit information more easily.
86. The review team found a lack of clarity in relation to the planned HND business course teaching timetable. The access and participation statement states that students can study part-time one day a week. The higher education teaching team told the review team in meetings that this was not the case, and that the information was out of date. The initial version of the teaching timetable shared with the review team had different numbers of contact hours for units in different terms to compress teaching into two and a half days a week but with no pedagogic explanation or rationale for this.
87. When the review team asked members of the teaching team about this, their explanation centred on fitting the timetable into a specific number of days rather than how the number of hours was equitable between units or how it supported a consistent and high quality student experience, or how it aligned with the unit specifications. In response to the view team's questions, LBC presented a new version of the timetable during the visit with each unit having the same contact time spread over two and a half or three and a half days depending on the number of units studied in the term. This meant that students would have the same number of contact hours for each unit, in line with the unit specifications. While the updated timetable appeared viable, the rapidly changing design indicated that plans had not been fully formed in light of the timetable.
88. To test whether approved course documentation shows that the curriculum design, content and organisation, learning teaching, and learning and assessment approaches enable students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes, the review team considered:
 - the HND business programme specification
 - the unit handbooks for the human resource management and business and the business environment
 - assignment briefs for human resource management and business and the business environment
 - lesson plans for human resource management and business and the business environment.
89. The Pearson specification states the aims of the course, learning objectives, teaching and assessment strategy, student support and guidance, and evaluation methods. LBC's HND

business course specification demonstrates that LBC has followed the awarding body requirements for unit selection and that LBC understands the approaches to curriculum design, course content and organisation, teaching and assessment that enable high quality delivery. The course is designed to address the learning outcomes, including knowledge and understanding, cognitive skills, applied skills and transferable skills. There are a range of teaching strategies, such as lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops and field trips supported by the VLE. There is also a range of assessment methods, such as written reports, presentations, role play and portfolio work. LBC intends that students will receive feedback on their draft assessed work to support their learning.

90. The review team found LBC has taken reasonable steps to design a high quality course because the LBC specification has covered the required information for a programme specification for standard UK higher education courses. In relation to course design the LBC includes information about: programme aims, programme outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment strategies, programme structure, levels, units, credits and awards. The human resource management and business and the business environment assignment briefs explain how the assignment tasks address each unit learning outcomes and include recommended text. The human resource management and business and the business environment lessons plans state the learning objectives of the session and teaching and learning activities related to learning objectives. LBC uses Moodle as the VLE platform. Moodle shows the course information, including the weekly lecture slides, which students can access in advance. Learning resources are available on Moodle and can be download in different languages or in MP3 format. Library resources and information on employability skills are also available on Moodle.
91. The review team noted that the human resource management unit handbook is detailed. It states the unit learning outcomes and provides a weekly scheme of work, including each topic and how it addresses the course learning outcome. Teaching strategy, learning resources and grading criteria are also included. The human resource management lesson plans set out teaching and learning activities and their associated student activity, the functional and other skills that students will develop, and the resources and assessment for each weekly session. The review team was impressed with the detailed design of weekly teaching and learning activities and the mapping of the weekly learning outcomes with the unit learning outcome. The human resource management assignment brief provided information about the case study related to the assignment, with a clear description of the assessment activities and guidance to complete it. The assignment also states clearly how different questions of the assignment address different learning outcomes.
92. The review team considered that the assessment for the planned course was designed by someone with sufficient expertise in the relevant subject area and that the unit handbook aligned well with Pearson requirements. The review team also triangulated the human resource management unit handbook with the business and the business environment unit handbook and found that both units followed a consistent structure. The clear structure of weekly lesson plans, assignments and the clear mapping to the unit learning outcome meant that these handbooks were high quality. This supported the review team's view that the quality and design of the course had benefited from careful thought.

93. Overall, the review team found the information in the course specification, unit handbooks, assignments and lesson plans are aligned with course learning outcomes so that if delivered well students will be able to participate in and complete a high quality course.
94. To assess how staff ensure courses are high quality, the review team met the senior leadership team, the higher education programme management team, higher education academic staff and professional staff. The higher education management team and teaching staff have extensive experience of designing and delivering higher education, which they are applying to the design and delivery of the HND business course. Evidence of their experience is detailed at paragraph 107.
95. Academic staff have followed Pearson guidance in developing the HND business course, such as adopting Pearson unit descriptors and teaching materials. They also reported making their own contributions, such as adding case studies and using multimedia resources to make teaching more practical and user-friendly.
96. LBC plans a rigorous process to ensure consistency and quality in unit assessment design and delivery whereby internal verifiers will provide feedback to academic staff on the draft assignment brief at the beginning of each semester. LBC also plans to review its awarding body's wider programme resources on a termly basis to identify if any changes need to be made to teaching materials. External examiners will monitor internally verified assignments. When more than one person teaches a unit, one person will be responsible for designing the teaching materials for the whole teaching team.
97. The review team found that LBC adopted an approach to ensuring consistency in the teaching materials delivered to different classes by different tutors. Professional support staff also have a good understanding of the awarding body's expectation about LBC's relevant policies and regulations and work closely with the higher education management and academic team to ensure the delivery of a high quality course. For example, the professional staff will collate samples for internal and external moderation and coordinate the moderation process to support the management and assessment of the course. Professional staff are aware of the quality and enhancement plan for higher education and contribute to the designs and the delivery of high quality courses by co-ordinating the internal verification process, developing resources, including learning support materials, and resources for enhancing academic and employability skills. Professional staff also organise and deliver induction programmes to learners to support their learning.

Conclusions

98. From the evidence seen, the review team concludes that LBC has designed a high quality course with a clear course structure. It has clear lesson plans and assessment strategies that support students to achieve unit learning outcomes. Their programme specification follows the awarding body's requirements. However, course timetables changed throughout the visit in response to questions from the team.
99. The programme design and approval policy, draft quality assurance handbook, teaching and learning strategy and assessment and internal verification policy underpin the design of courses because they provide a framework to facilitate the design and delivery of high quality courses.

100. LBC has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for designing high quality courses. The provider has developed the course supported by a quality assurance procedure which is aligned with Pearson requirements. The staff also deliver high quality teaching materials by adding additional teaching materials to those from the awarding body.
101. Staff understand LBC's approach to designing and delivering high quality courses and are prepared to implement the planned course. In addition to having policies and processes that enable the development of courses, which in design and delivery can address course learning outcomes, the staff have the knowledge and commitment to deliver high quality courses. However, the review team note that LBC has not yet delivered the course, so it was unable to triangulate this core practice with evidence, such as external examiner reports and feedback from students. Overall, the review team conclude that this core practice is met.

Core practice Q3

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

102. To meet this core practice a provider must ensure that it has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high quality academic experience.

What the evidence shows

103. To assess whether LBC has robust and credible plans for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff, the review team considered:

- the staff recruitment and selection policy and procedure
- the equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policy
- the induction programme for new employees.

104. LBC describes staff recruitment in the staff recruitment and selection policy and procedure, which is supported by the EDI policy. The staff recruitment and selection policy and procedure is robust and comprehensive because it clearly lays out requirements from the point of procedure to the induction of new staff and identifies who is responsible for which aspect of the employment process. LBC provides an induction programme for new employees, which covers:

- welcome
- important documents
- login details
- individual introductions to other members of staff
- a tour of the workplace
- health and safety
- terms and conditions
- policies and procedures
- job role and expectations
- culture of the work area
- office systems
- the employee file.

105. While the induction documentation did not detail familiarity with systems such as the VLE, which would be an issue as this is a crucial system for supporting and interacting with students, the programme team and HR were able to confirm that this was included in the induction programme. In discussions with the review team, academic staff demonstrated that they are familiar with the VLE and its capabilities. In addition, academic staff who had recently joined LBC were familiar with the IT systems and their capabilities. Therefore, the review team was satisfied that familiarity with IT systems and the VLE were covered as part of staff inductions. A robust selection policy, supported by an EDI policy and a comprehensive induction programme enable LBC to recruit, appoint and induct appropriately qualified and skilled staff.
106. To assess whether LBC's regulations or policies for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support for staff provide for a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and skilled staff, LBC provided evidence of the planned student-to-staff ratio for the HND course along with its student recruitment plan. Based on LBC's approved recruitment numbers with Pearson of 30 students, the student-to-staff ratio (SSR) would be 12:1. If it is successful in gaining an increase in numbers to 50 this would change to 20:1. In both cases these ratios should provide a sufficient number of staff to adequately support student learning.
107. To identify whether the staff are appropriately qualified to perform their role effectively, the review team considered: staff CVs, and heard from staff on the visit. Academic staff CVs indicated that the higher education lecturing staff are appropriately qualified because they show a significant amount of higher education teaching experience across a range of providers and in an appropriate mix of subjects, such as strategic management, accounting, marketing and human resources management, which directly relate to the content of the HND business course. Most higher education academic staff are fellows of the HEA, one being a senior fellow. This indicated significant experience and knowledge of teaching in higher education. Given the level of qualifications, including a range of Level 7 and 8 qualifications and experience at a range of similar providers, the review team had no concerns about staff ability to supervise research projects and teach the content required for the course. The HND business teaching staff are new to LBC. However, staff have credible plans for timetabling the work to prepare and deliver the course before it starts. Based on the academic CVs, the breadth of staff expertise and teaching experience, the review team consider that academic staff have sufficient experience and are appropriately qualified to deliver a high quality learning experience.
108. To assess whether students consider that the provider has sufficient staff and that those staff are appropriately qualified and skilled, the review team spoke to further education students during the review visit. The review team were unable to speak to higher education students because the course has not yet started. As there will be similarities in the processes and approaches between higher education and further education at LBC, the review team felt that further education student feedback was useful for surveying evidence with regards to provision. Further education students who are studying with LBC informed the review team that they thought staff were appropriately knowledgeable and could answer questions, indicating that LBC has a track record of ensuring the appropriate knowledge and understanding of its teaching staff.
109. To identify how the provider will support staff to deliver a high quality course the review team considered the staff teaching observation process. This is designed to support the quality of

teaching and the development of teaching skills and is set out in the draft quality assurance handbook. The observer, a senior member of the higher education team, experienced in higher education delivery, will record their observations formally through a lecturer observation form for the HND business course. This form systematically breaks down different aspects of the session to ensure that the lecture is well structured and feedback is provided on any areas that are deficient. Opportunities for praise and improvement are listed as well as an action plan.

110. LBC also plans for a peer observation process by which staff observe and provide feedback to each other, documented separately through a peer review form. LBC's policies specify that observations will occur twice per term with observation feedback discussed after the lecture and as part of staff development meetings to ensure that staff are appropriately supported. The peer review form is similar in structure, but less detailed than the lesson observation form. However, it appears to be appropriate. The review team considered these plans are credible and robust because they will ensure that staff are delivering in line with LBC policy, observations are carried out by appropriate members of staff and across the range of actions that would be expected to be seen in teaching sessions. The plans will help to ensure LBC has skilled staff and adequately supports them in their development. The review team was unable to observe teaching as part of the visit as LBC is not yet delivering the course.
111. Staff training and development is listed as a strategic focus in the LBC strategic plan 'To enhance the capabilities, professional standards and educational adaptability of our staff members'. More detail on LBC's approach to this is provided in the staff training and development policy. This latter policy describes a comprehensive approach to the types of training and development offered to LBC staff for them to develop in their roles. It outlines the aims of staff development, the responsibilities of those in the process, the types of training offered, (for example, upskilling, specialist training, induction, courses and secondments) and how this is paid for.
112. LBC expects staff to record their professional development and provides a template for this. While the strategic plan and the staff training and development policy set out a viable approach, the documentation does not provide details on specific courses or offerings for staff development. When questioned on the visit, staff described both internal and external development opportunities, including sessions led by staff to share best practice, external recognition of teaching through professional accreditation, and access to the Pearson's professional development material. In all cases these opportunities are already available or planned and therefore the plans are credible. There is a process for financial support for paid development opportunities with particular support for HEA fellowship. Decisions on financial support occur through HR and the LBC's leadership, although specific examples were not provided.

Conclusions

113. The team's observations led them to conclude that LBC has appropriately qualified and skilled staff who possess appropriate qualifications and experience to deliver a high quality academic experience across the range of subjects required in the qualification. LBC has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that it has sufficient staff to deliver higher education based on planned student and staff numbers, because the staff have sufficient experience and expertise in the areas covered by the HND course. LBC recruits, appoints, inducts and supports staff appropriately in order to ensure a high quality academic

experience. Its plans are appropriate in all these areas as they ensure a robust process that meets the needs of the provision. The review team concludes therefore that the core practice is met.

Core practice Q4

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

114. To meet this core practice a provider must ensure it has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high quality academic experience.

What the evidence shows

115. The review team toured LBC's facilities for higher education students, looked at the learning resources, and met with staff in order to assess whether facilities and learning resources provide a high quality academic experience. They triangulated this with the student recruitment plan to test whether the provider has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring they have sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high quality academic experience.

116. LBC is based in a single building in London. This building is grade-two listed and therefore there are constraints stemming from room sizes, accessibility, and the inability to make changes to the layout. The team saw three classrooms that had been designated for the delivery of the HND business course. Two were adequate in size for teaching groups of 16 to 17 students. However, the third room, designated to fit 16 to 17 students, appears significantly undersized. LBC noted that it could make other rooms, currently used for Level 3 courses available if needed. However, it was not clear to what degree this plan has been developed because no specific rooms were identified, and it was not clear whether there was enough space to deliver Level 3 courses alongside the HND business course in the additional space. The current space appears adequate to teach an intake of 30 students but if student numbers increase to 50, then there may be insufficient space to adequately teach all students. The senior leadership team suggested it would be possible to acquire a new campus or building to facilitate additional students but this is not imminent and depends on student recruitment to the new course. LBC does not have specific or detailed plans to expand its premises, and these were not included in the strategic plan. Students also have access to a small kitchen area in the basement, which while small, did provide acceptable facilities.

117. The review team considered the provider's plan for future student numbers. The student recruitment plan for HND business states a recruitment target of 50 students for September 2024. The review team clarified with LBC its student recruitment plans for the HND business course because LBC originally intended to recruit 60 students from September 2024. Pearson subsequently approved a registration capacity of 20 learners per annum with a default of 50 per cent growth per year, meaning that in total it can recruit 30 learners from September 2024. LBC is planning to apply to Pearson for a registration threshold increase to facilitate their intention to recruit up to 50 students. LBC's independent adviser for the HND business course informed the review team that they understood that Pearson had capped the new provider to a 20-student intake with 50 per cent annual increase after the satisfactory delivery of the first year. They suggested that it was too early to say whether LBC will be able to get approval to recruit 50 students from September 2024. Overall, the review team had concerns

that plans relating to teaching space and planned student numbers had not been fully thought through.

118. The library facilities available at LBC are sufficient to provide a high quality level of education. The library includes a study area with laptops that students can borrow. The choice of physical books is relatively small. However, the electronic resources offer access to a large range of electronic reference sources, including key texts, such as journal articles and case studies, which will be adequate to support student learning. LBC has clear policies to support students in accessing information, including through LBC's facilities and other local libraries. LBC demonstrated the VLE. The review team considered that it was adequate to support student needs because it allowed students to navigate important information about their course and results. Staff can check student progress and attendance and record notes where appropriate. When asked about facilities, current further education students were positive about the library and other resources, and thought that these were sufficient to support a high quality education. Many of these resources will also be used by higher education students, (for example, the library). While higher education students will have greater, and in some cases different, needs to further education students, the positive views of further education students are informative because they demonstrate they do not experience issues with the LBC facilities.
119. To confirm that relevant staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to student support, the review team looked at evidence detailing how LBC intended to triangulate different evidence sources and spoke to a broad range of professional and academic staff during the visit. The staff directly involved in higher education understood their roles in supporting higher education students. They were able to describe the systems in place at LBC and what the likely needs of the students would be, along with how these could be supported. They also discussed their plans for new initiatives which were based on their previous experience and skills in working in higher education such as employability, including working with employers, careers events and entrepreneurial-focused skills development, to credibly support the needs of future higher education students.
120. To assess student views about support services and whether staff understand their roles and responsibilities, the team spoke to further education students during the visit and professional support staff. The professional support staff were able to describe which current services would be used by higher education students how the best practice from these services would be carried over. The review team spoke to students receiving individualised learning support for conditions such as anxiety. These students were very positive about the support LBC provided, stating that it helped them to address their needs and succeed after struggling elsewhere. As these services would also be used by higher education students in a similar way, this gave the review team confidence that they would provide adequate support.
121. LBC plans to adopt a similar approach to supporting higher education students as for further education students with the addition of more individual contact and more employability skills. LBC sets out its approach to student support in a learner guidance and support policy. This policy sets out the responsibilities and scope of those involved; students and staff, and how support is implemented by different individuals, including professional and academic staff. Students have personal tutors who signpost and help provide support directly and are available to students. New academic staff members are provided with training in providing personal tutor support. These academic staff are supported by professional staff to support

students, including support for students with learning difficulties. The head of higher education is available to listen to students and answer academic questions. The student welfare office support personal tutors in their role and support students directly. LBC described how the different groups of staff interact to support students and share relevant data, such as attendance data and engagement data which shows a joined-up approach. The review team reviewed the CVs of the staff involved in student support work, including pastoral and educational needs support and found that student support staff appeared to be appropriately qualified and experienced for the support they provide. The review team found that LBCs plans and resources for student support were well thought through and resourced.

Conclusions

122. The team's observations led it to conclude that LBC's strategies and plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are generally credible, realistic and linked to the delivery of successful academic outcomes for students. While the building has constraints due to its age and listed status, it is sufficient for delivery for the currently approved cohort of 30 but LBC did not provide credible plans for sufficient space for the desired cohort of 50.
123. The information and student support services are particularly strong because they will provide a broad range of appropriate resources and support to students. Staff understand their roles in providing these services. Further education students appear to regard the facilities, learning resources and student support services as sufficient and appropriate, which suggests they facilitate a high quality academic experience.
124. From the experience of these students and the provider's plans to adapt and expand them, the team was satisfied that this would support students in a higher education context. The review team therefore concluded that the core practice is met.

Core practice Q5

The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

125. To meet this core practice a provider must ensure that it actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

What evidence the team considered and what it shows

126. To identify whether LBC has robust and credible evidence-based plans to actively engage students in the quality of their educational experience the assessment team considered:

- the student engagement policy and procedures
- the management and governance structure
- the student representative appointment form
- the draft quality assurance handbook
- academic planning committee minutes
- the complaints policy and procedure.

127. The student engagement policy sets out the key aspects of LBC's plans for student engagement. This policy lists a student committee to which students will elect representatives. This will operate from September 2024 when the HND business course starts. Details of this committee are included in the management and governance structure. It will meet once per term and report to the academic board which will consider its reports. It will be attended by elected student representatives, a selection of academic and professional staff, including programme leads and the student welfare officer and will be chaired by the head of higher education.

128. The student engagement policy notes a 'You Said We Did' approach, and LBC's newsletter provides examples of how it has responded to feedback from current students. Further education students are, and higher education students will be, present on key committees in LBC, including the academic board and programme committee, as listed in the draft quality assurance handbook. Examples of current students (in the current absence of higher education students) being present at key committees are included in the academic planning committee minutes. Presence on these committees allows students to have a voice in academic matters at LBC, reflecting their opinions and views on provision.

129. The complaints policy and procedure set out how LBC will address student complaints and the process it will follow. The process has four levels progressing through conciliation, formal complaint, appeal to the head of higher education or the registrar, and independent review. In general, the policy is comprehensive and outlines a complaints procedure that is robust. The policy comprises multiple levels of referral, each considered by different individuals, starting from informal resolution and working up to a panel that potentially includes the principal. The

terms and operation of the different levels are well defined in the documentation. The complaints procedure, however, does not include details about how a student can escalate their complaint to an external adjudicator. The review team was informed in meetings with LBC that it would add this to the complaints procedure for higher education once OfS registration was completed and that this information would be included in the student induction slides.

130. To assess the impact of LBC's approach to engage students, the review team looked at a copy of the LBC college newsletter from January 2024 and met with further education students during the visit. Current students had experience of similar feedback processes to those planned for higher education students. LBC has plans for collecting student feedback through multiple streams. These are listed in the student engagement policy and the draft quality assurance handbook and include a staff student committee, unit evaluation forms and student complaints feedback. Taken together these plans, if implemented, would comprise a robust and full suite of feedback mechanisms as they take feedback from students at a range of points, through different mechanisms on a full range of different aspects of their education.
131. The team saw evidence of 'You Said We Did' communication in a copy of the LBC newsletter. It is a process whereby the actions resulting from student feedback are communicated to students to show that action has been taken. It suggests that LBC takes some feedback into account and acts on it in related contexts through the mechanisms outlined in the policies. The review team was content that a similar process would continue with higher education students. The review team considered whether the volume of feedback mechanisms could risk survey fatigue or poor quality feedback and were reassured that higher education academic staff were aware of this risk and were actively trying to think of ways to mitigate against it.

Conclusions

132. The team's observations led them to conclude that LBC has robust and credible plans to actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience because they have a broad range of approaches both to gain feedback and to actively engage students in lessons. These approaches are currently applied successfully in the further education context and are planned to be used in the higher education context.
133. The plans set out in detail in appropriate policies such as the student engagement policy and the draft quality assurance handbook. LBC has a clear and effective approach to engaging students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience because it provides multiple opportunities for student to provide feedback on all areas of the experience through different mechanisms. These have been shown to work successfully for LBC with further education students and the review team is confident that they will be applied, and be effective, for higher education students.
134. The team saw examples of how LBC changed and improved students' learning experience as a result of student engagement and students reported that LBC engaged them in the quality of their educational experience. The review team concludes therefore that the core practice was met.

Core practice Q9

The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

135. To meet this core practice a provider must ensure that it support all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

What the evidence shows

136. To identify the provider's approach to student support, the review team looked at the learner guidance and support policy, which outlines LBC's approach to supporting students with additional learning needs, including those in higher education. The policy encourages students to come forward with these needs so that LBC can provide adequate support. Needs may also be identified through other mechanisms, such as student application and induction. LBC informs staff of the support available through the staff induction process. This was reinforced at the review visit where academic staff could clearly describe how to signpost students to support. The provider's approach to identifying and monitoring the needs of students was also considered. Further detail is included at paragraph 121.

137. To confirm that academic and professional staff understand their responsibilities and are appropriately skilled and supported in supporting student achievement the review team considered:

- the learner guidance and support policy
- the draft quality assurance handbook
- information about how student data will be triangulated
- the staff training and development policy
- meetings with academic and professional services staff during the review visit.

138. The learner guidance and support policy details the student support responsibilities of different staff roles. The approach to monitoring student progress is set out in the draft quality assurance handbook with additional detail in the document that explains how the data will be triangulated. This describes how a range of data sources will be used, analysed and compared to identify patterns and potential issues. Information from different sources will be used to cross-verify findings. Programme and professional staff will both take responsibility for analysing data, with the programme leader focusing on academic data and administrative staff focusing on data such as attendance. The process outlined shows that the provider is seriously considering student progress and how to best monitor it.

139. The staff training and development policy highlights that training is available to staff to refine student support systems and processes. This was confirmed with higher education academic staff during the review visit, who highlighted training on safeguarding and mental health. This indicates that LBC recognises the importance of strong student support in ensuring student success.

140. LBC has a student support team working under the registrar who are responsible for supporting students and the review team met them during the visit. Their responsibilities include: disability and welfare services, careers support, and examinations support. They support current students by providing advice to them, particularly around their studies, and in supporting any needs arising from disabilities. The team aim to replicate the best practice from this work to support higher education students.
141. To identify whether LBC has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that all students are supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes, the review team considered:
- the equality disability policy
 - the opportunities policy
 - examples of individual learning support plans
 - the individual learning plan template.
142. The LBC disability policy specifies how LBC will support students with disabilities and is available on the intranet. It is detailed in describing different types of disabilities and the approach to supporting them. For example, it describes what general support staff should offer to students and signposts where the students should go for advice or support for specific disabilities. It includes information about disclosure and reasonable adjustments. For example, it includes information about additional time or assistive technology for examination arrangements. It also acknowledges the accessibility constraints of the building. The policy outlines the roles of students and different groups of staff in reporting and supporting disabilities and needs. Referral of students who develop disabilities during their studies is also covered with examples of services such as GPs and dyslexia support services highlighted.
143. This policy is appropriate because it sets out a clear framework for supporting disabled students and ensuring their success with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for key groups. Students are provided with information on how to report or raise disabilities through the induction process and the role of the disability and welfare service in providing this support is also highlighted in the student handbook.
144. LBC demonstrates a commitment to equality and diversity. This is set out in several relevant policies, most notably the equal opportunities policy, which sets out the role of staff and students and several areas of action, such as, student experience, student recruitment and curriculum. Equality and diversity is also reflected in the staff recruitment and selection procedure, which expressed the aim to recruit staff that reflect the student community.
145. To assess students' views about student support mechanisms, the review team met a selection of further education students during the review visit as well as considering learning support plans, including support plans for students with additional needs.
146. Further education students reported that small group sizes, enabled high levels of individual support and reduced stress from large groups. They also highlighted staff commitment to supporting students, for example, using online learning provision to reduce anxiety, and allowing increased time in assessments. Students noted that this contributed positively to

their experience. The review team expect a similar level of support to continue in the higher education provision.

147. Learning support plans for students detail how LBC supports individual students in their learning when encountering challenges. These plans are generally adequate because they detail the student's need and the feasible, practical steps being taken to resolve it. The review team also considered learning support plans for students with additional needs, which detailed the additional support that they received. These students provided very positive feedback during the visit about the support they had received from LBC and how it had positively impacted their studies.
148. LBC conducted an employer survey in May 2023 to determine demand for the HND business course from employers. LBC intends to apply for Matrix accreditation. The matrix standard is an international standard for information, advice and guidance services and it is owned by the Department for Education. Accreditation recognises an organisation's high standards in delivering information advice and guidance. LBC has provided a timeline for application. The preparation for Matrix accreditation will start in September 2024 and the Matrix Standard Review will be undertaken in January 2025.

Conclusions

149. The team's observations led them to conclude that LBC has plans to support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes which are comprehensive, robust and credible. These plans are set out across multiple policies and included key quality and student support documents, which staff were able to articulate. Evidence was seen of their effectiveness on the current further education student cohort, with the expectation that they will be similarly effective for higher education students.
150. LBC's policy and plans to support students should facilitate successful academic and professional outcomes because they provide an operational framework that identifies and addresses students' needs. Further education students feel these policies support their studies and it is the review teams view that they will be effective for higher education students as well.
151. Academic staff understood their roles in supporting student achievement and helping students become successful, supported by a team of professional support staff. Further education students agree they are adequately supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. The same support will be available to higher education students and should help to support positive outcomes. The review team concludes therefore that the core practice is met.



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