

Office for  
Students



OfS

# Degree awarding powers assessment report for Engineering College of Technology Limited

**New degree awarding powers assessment**

**Provider legal name:** Engineering College of Technology Limited

**Provider trading name:** Engineering College of Technology

**UKPRN:** 10089771

**Assessment conducted:** 6 June 2024 to 16 December 2024

**Reference** OfS 2025.18

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# Executive summary

<b>Type of assessment</b>	Quality and standards assessment for new degree awarding powers
<b>For</b>	Engineering College of Technology

1. This report represents the conclusions of an assessment for new degree awarding powers (New DAPs) at Engineering College of Technology.
2. The college is seeking authorisation for New DAPs for taught awards up to and including Level 7, in the following CAH-coded subject: engineering and technology (CAH10).
3. To carry out the assessment, the Office for Students (OfS) appointed an assessment team, which included three academic experts and one member of OfS staff. This report contains the advice and judgement of the team following its assessment.
4. The team concluded that the college is ready to operate with New DAPs (see Table 1). This report does not, however, represent any decision of the OfS to authorise these powers.

**Table 1: Summary of advice against the DAPs criteria**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>The provider has a credible New DAPs plan</b>	<b>The provider has demonstrated a full understanding of the DAPs criteria</b>
Criterion A1: Academic governance	Met	Met
Criterion B1: Regulatory frameworks	Met	Met
Criterion B2: Academic standards	Met	Met
Criterion B3: Quality of the academic experience	Met	Met
Criterion C1: Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff	Met	Met
Criterion D1: Environment for supporting students	Met	Met
Criterion E1: Evaluation of performance	Met	Met
<b>The standards set for the proposed courses are at an appropriate level</b>		
Met		
<b>Overarching New DAPs criterion</b>		
The college is an emerging self-critical, cohesive academic community with a clear commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective (in prospect) quality systems		Met

## What are new degree awarding powers?

The OfS may authorise a registered higher education provider to grant taught awards, or research awards, or both, under section 42 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA).<sup>1</sup>

A provider that has been delivering higher education for less than three years does not have a sufficient track record to apply for a full degree awarding powers (Full DAPs) authorisation. It can instead apply for a new degree awarding powers (New DAPs) authorisation.<sup>2</sup>

New DAPs authorisations are granted on a probationary time-limited basis. A provider that has held New DAPs for a period of four years will normally be eligible to seek time-limited Full DAPs at the end of the probationary period.

A provider may seek authorisation for New DAPs for the following awards:

- foundation degrees only
- awards up to, and including, bachelors' degrees
- all taught awards.

Providers may apply for these authorisations on a subject-specific basis or covering all subjects.

## Assessment and decision-making process

Before deciding whether to authorise a provider with New DAPs, the OfS will undertake a New DAPs test. The purpose of a New DAPs test is to gather evidence to inform a judgement on the extent to which a provider:

- has a credible New DAPs plan which demonstrates how it will be able to meet the DAPs criteria, including the overarching criterion for New DAPs, by the end of the probationary period
- demonstrates a full understanding of the DAPs criteria
- has or will set academic standards for the proposed courses at an appropriate level / has arrangements that can take effect from the date of the New DAPs authorisation, to make awards at the level for which it has applied.

The full requirements of the criteria are detailed in Annex C of the OfS's regulatory framework.<sup>3</sup>

A provider that is granted New DAPs will be required to implement its agreed New DAPs plan and to engage in monitoring and scrutiny activities during the probationary period.

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<sup>1</sup> See: [Higher Education and Research Act 2017, section 42](#).

<sup>2</sup> For a summary of different types of degree awarding powers, see [Degree awarding powers - Office for Students](#).

<sup>3</sup> See the OfS's regulatory framework: [Annex C – Guidance on the criteria for the authorisation for DAPs - Office for Students](#).

OfS officers first undertake an eligibility and suitability assessment of the provider. This initial assessment determines whether the provider is eligible and suitable for the New DAPs test, including the scope of the assessment.

Assessments for degree awarding powers are conducted by teams with membership which includes academic experts that the OfS has appointed. The outcome of the assessment is typically a report, compiled by the assessment team, summarising its findings.

The report is then considered by the OfS's Quality Assessment Committee (QAC). The QAC has responsibility for providing advice to the OfS under section 46 of HERA on the quality of and standards applied to the higher education being delivered by providers for which the OfS is considering granting, varying (or in certain circumstances revoking) authorisation for DAPs.<sup>4</sup>

After considering the assessment report, the QAC provides advice to the OfS regarding quality and standards.

In making its decision about whether to authorise DAPs on the basis sought by the provider, the OfS will have regard to the assessment report and the QAC's advice. The OfS will also consider its own risk assessment of the provider and will have regard to advice received from others where this has been sought. It will also take into account other relevant considerations, such as the OfS's general duties under section 2 of HERA.<sup>5</sup>

### Further information

We have published further information about authorising New DAPs in Regulatory advice 12.<sup>6</sup>

5. Engineering College of Technology ('the college') is a private limited company which was incorporated on 6 October 2021. The college does not yet deliver higher education but plans to offer four online undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses in engineering.
6. On 6 December 2023, the college submitted an application for a New DAPs authorisation to make taught awards, up to and including Level 7.
7. In accordance with the OfS's regulatory framework and the guidance on how to apply for DAPs,<sup>7</sup> the college is eligible to be considered for New DAPs for all taught awards (up to and including Level 7) because it meets the eligibility criteria set out in paragraph 221 of the OfS's regulatory framework.
8. The OfS appointed an assessment team on 9 May 2024 which consisted of three academic expert assessors and a member of OfS staff.
9. The team was asked to give its advice and judgements about whether:

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<sup>4</sup> See [Higher Education and Research Act 2017, section 46](#).

<sup>5</sup> See [Higher Education and Research Act 2017, section 2](#).

<sup>6</sup> See [Regulatory advice 12: How to apply for degree awarding powers - Office for Students](#).

<sup>7</sup> See [Regulatory advice 12: How to apply for degree awarding powers - Office for Students](#).

- the college has a credible New DAPs plan
  - the college has demonstrated a full understanding of the DAPs criteria
  - the standards set for the proposed courses are at an appropriate level.
10. This report does not represent any decision of the OfS in respect of whether the New DAPs order the college is seeking should be granted.
  11. This report will be considered by the QAC at its meeting of 22 January 2025. QAC will formulate its advice to the OfS regarding quality and standards at the college, having considered this report.
  12. The OfS will consider the assessment report, and QAC's advice in deciding whether to grant the college's New DAPs order on the basis requested. The OfS will also consider its own risk assessment for the college and have regard to the advice received from others where this has been sought, as well as other relevant considerations such as the OfS's general duties under section 2 of HERA.

# Introduction and background

13. This report represents the conclusions of an assessment for new degree awarding powers (New DAPs) at Engineering College of Technology.
14. The college is seeking authorisation for New DAPs for taught awards, up to and including Level 7, in the following CAH-coded subject: engineering and technology (CAH10).
15. QAC will consider the report and formulate its advice to the OfS regarding the quality and standards at the college.
16. The OfS will consider this assessment report, and QAC's advice in deciding whether to grant the college's New DAP's authorisation on the basis requested. The OfS will also consider its own risk assessment of the college and will have regard to advice received from others where this has been sought. It will also take into account other relevant considerations, such as the OfS's general duties under section 2 of HERA.

## Context

17. The Engineering College of Technology was established in Worcester Park by its sister company, the Engineering Institute of Technology (EIT). The college has been registered as a private limited company and provider of online higher education in the UK since October 2021. In April 2024, the college became registered with the Office for Students.
18. The college's sister company is a registered higher education provider in Australia with over 15 years' experience of delivering accredited industry-endorsed qualifications in engineering and technology. EIT currently has over 4,000 home and international students enrolled in its programmes which it offers online and from its campuses in Perth and Melbourne.
19. The college has adapted its academic frameworks, policies and procedures from those already operating successfully at EIT, to ensure that they are appropriate for the unique programme offering in the UK and align with the requirements of the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) and other relevant external points of reference.
20. The college will further draw on support, resources and expertise from EIT during the first six to 12 months of operation. Its academic and operational management roles will initially be filled by specialist staff from EIT who have been involved in the design and planning of the college's higher education delivery, including the Dean, Academic Resources Manager, IT Manager and two Course Leaders. They will also guide and mentor new staff who are appointed to these roles.
21. To date, the college has appointed a dedicated Learning Support Officer and two Course Advisors. The college also plans to recruit a Head of College, Higher Education Manager, Quality and Compliance Manager, Office and HR Manager, subject lecturers, admissions and IT support staff before it commences programme delivery.
22. The college's target group will be students employed in the engineering industry. Its mission is to 'provide students in the United Kingdom and across the world with measurable and

significant productivity gains in their workplaces through cutting edge and applied engineering education’.

23. The college will offer four undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the areas of engineering and technology:
  - BEng (Hons) Electrical Engineering
  - BEng (Hons) Industrial Automation Engineering
  - MSc Industrial Automation and Instrumentation Control
  - MSc Power System Analysis and Renewable Integration.
24. The programmes have been designed to be delivered online via distance learning, on a full-time or part-time basis. During the probationary period, the college plans to deliver its programmes on a part-time basis only in order to facilitate students who are likely to be working in industry.
25. The college plans to recruit a cohort of between seven and ten students to each programme in its first year of probationary monitoring, increasing to between 11 and 15 students by the end of the probationary period. The college intends to enrol two cohorts per year for each programme.
26. The college will continue to operate from its office in Worcester Park and is in the process of securing office space in Stevenage. This new site will become the college’s head office and will provide access to in-person workshop facilities, remote and virtual laboratory software.
27. The college also plans to establish and collaborate with industry partners to ensure its programmes are relevant and provide opportunities for students and staff to engage with industry through guest lecturers and work experience. After the probationary period, the college also plans to seek professional accreditation for its programmes through the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET).
28. In accordance with the OfS’s regulatory framework and the OfS’s guidance on how to apply for DAPs, the OfS undertook an initial eligibility and suitability assessment of the college. It decided that a New DAPs test, including an online visit, should be undertaken to inform a judgement about whether:
  - the college has a credible New DAPs plan
  - the college has demonstrated a full understanding of the DAPs criteria
  - the standards set for the proposed course are at an appropriate level.
29. The OfS appointed an assessment team on 9 May 2024 that consisted of three academic expert assessors and a member of OfS staff in the following roles:
  - a. Professor Jon Scott – committee chair and lead assessor
  - b. Joanna Rawska – deputy committee chair and assessor

- c. Dr James McDowell – deputy committee chair and assessor
  - d. Thea Jones – committee member and assessment coordinator.
30. The OfS asked the team to give its advice and judgements about the quality of, and standards applied to, proposed higher education courses at the college. Furthermore, whether the college has a credible New DAPs plan which demonstrates a full understanding of the DAPs criteria, including the overarching criteria for a New DAPs authorisation.
31. The assessment team considered a range of information submitted by the college in support of its application for New DAPs authorisation.

# Assessment process

## Information gathering

32. In accordance with the operational guidance on assessment for degree awarding powers, the college submitted a detailed New DAPs plan and self-assessment document on 6 June 2024, setting out how it will meet the DAPs criteria in full before the end of the probationary period, and its arrangements to make awards up to and including Level 7 from the intended start date of the probationary powers.
33. To support the statements made in the New DAPs plan and self-assessment document, the college submitted a range of documentary evidence. This included programme documentation and information relating to academic policies, procedures, governance structures and CVs for academic and senior staff.
34. Following its initial analysis of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence submission, the assessment team requested further information from the college. The college submitted a response to this request on 3 July 2024.
35. After a review of the additional information submitted by the college, the assessment team undertook a desk-based assessment of all the available evidence. The team met to discuss its findings and requested further information from the college. The college submitted a response to this request on 24 July 2024. The team was also granted access to the college's virtual learning environment (VLE) and virtual laboratories.
36. The assessment team also agreed the programme of activities for the New DAPs test visit (see [paragraph 39](#)). The OfS assessment coordinator shared the proposed visit programme with the college on 8 August 2024.
37. Following a review of the additional information submitted by the college on 24 July 2024, the assessment team requested further evidence relating to one area. The college submitted a response to this request on 19 August 2024.
38. The assessment team reviewed the additional evidence submitted by the college and sought further clarification on one area. The college submitted a response to this on 26 August 2024.

## Visit and observations

39. The assessment team conducted an online visit to the college, which took place across two days on 4 and 6 September 2024. The visit consisted of meetings with senior staff, academic and support staff, and an online demonstration of the VLE and digital learning resources.
40. Following the online visit to the college, the assessment team met to reflect on the evidence gathered. The team requested further evidence from the college. The college submitted a response to this request on 20 September 2024.

# Assessment of DAPs criterion A: Academic governance

## Criterion A1: Academic governance

### Advice to the OfS

41. The assessment team's view is that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion A1: Academic governance.
42. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion A1.
43. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows in summary that the college has developed an academic governance framework with clear accountability at all levels, designed to oversee academic responsibilities and align decision-making with the college's mission and strategic objectives.
44. This view is based on specific consideration of the supporting evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

### Subcriterion A1.1

**A1.1: An organisation granted degree awarding powers has effective academic governance, with clear and appropriate lines of accountability for its academic responsibilities.**

### Advice to the OfS

45. The assessment team's view is that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion A1.1 because it has established effective academic governance, with clear and appropriate lines of accountability for its academic responsibilities.
46. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion A1.1 because it has developed a governance framework that clearly defines roles and responsibilities at every level of its academic structure, including how it will engage students. This framework demonstrates that academic governance is systematically managed, with clear reporting lines and accountability mechanisms that align with its strategic academic goals.
47. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence, which shows that the college can be reasonably expected to meet the evidence requirements for A1.1 in full by the end of the probationary period.

## Reasoning

48. To determine whether the college's higher education mission, strategic direction and associated policies are coherent, published, understood and applied consistently, the assessment team reviewed documents including:
- the college's 'Strategic Plan 2024-2029 UK'
  - the 'Learning and Teaching Strategy'
  - the 'Quality Assurance System: Policies, Procedures and Key Documents April 2024'
  - the 'Terms of Reference: Governance Board, Academic Board and Board of Studies' and 'Joint Board Minutes'
  - the 'ECT End of Study Period Survey'
  - the 'ECT Boards, and Academic Staff Profile'.
49. The assessment team found coherence between the mission and goals outlined in the college's 'Strategic Plan 2024-2029 UK' and those set out in the 'Learning and Teaching Strategy'. Both documents emphasise the college's commitment to quality, student-centred learning, and meeting industry needs. For example, the 'Learning and Teaching Strategy' [009] highlights plans to create an inclusive, supportive learning environment, promote lifelong learning, and address employability through relevant curriculum design. This aligns with the Strategic Plan's focus on innovation, sustainability, and preparing graduates for productive roles in engineering fields. Additionally, the 'Quality Assurance System' is intended to ensure that the implementation of these strategies will be systematic and aligned with established academic standards.
50. While the assessment team observed that the college's Strategic Plan and associated policies are not yet published on its website,<sup>8</sup> the college reported in its self-assessment that all policies and procedures will be made available via the website following (and subject to) authorisation of New DAPs. The team further observed that similar documents are clearly published on EIT's website, leading the team to expect that the college will follow the same approach.<sup>9</sup>
51. Although the assessment team was not able to directly test the consistent application of these policies, the team found that the terms of reference for the college's Governance Board, Academic Board and Board of Studies set out clear roles and responsibilities related to this. The document confirms that both the Governance and Academic Boards will play an integral role in reviewing and approving academic policies, facilitating their consistent understanding and application across the college. The terms of reference also demonstrate that academic policies will be reviewed regularly and are overseen by the Governance and Academic Boards, facilitating consistent understanding and application across the college as evidenced by the 'Joint Board Minutes' from November 2023. The assessment team formed the view that

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<sup>8</sup> See [UK ECT | Engineering College of Technology](#).

<sup>9</sup> Following its review of the draft report, the college confirmed on 6 December 2024 that the Strategic Plan and associated policies have now been published on its website.

the college has mechanisms in place to ensure that academic policies, such as those related to assessment regulations, student protection, and quality assurance, will be applied consistently.

52. Further evidence was provided through the 'ECT End of Study Period Survey', which details the mechanisms that will be operated to assess students' understanding of academic policies, including assessment regulations. The survey includes a range of questions designed to evaluate various aspects of the educational experience, such as the quality of teaching, clarity of module structure, and the effectiveness of learning resources. The assessment team considers these survey questions to be appropriate and robust, as they cover critical areas that will contribute to the overall learning experience. Additionally, the open-ended questions are designed to allow enrolled students to provide qualitative feedback, which will offer valuable insights into potential improvements.
53. Additionally, the assessment team reviewed the profiles and accomplishments of the college's senior management and academic staff, which demonstrated that staff possess the necessary qualifications and industry experience to implement the college's strategic aims effectively. For example, the Dean has extensive industry experience as a Technical Director for a technology training company and has published multiple books and papers in the field of engineering. The Higher Education Manager has previous experience as Head of Program and Acting Director at an Australian technical and further education provider and has contributed to several conference publications on engineering education. Furthermore, the Chair of the Governance Board is a Chartered Engineer and has held significant leadership positions in both industry and academia, with numerous published works. The assessment team concluded that these profiles illustrate a strong foundation of expertise that will guide the implementation of the college's strategic objectives.
54. Further evidence of the alignment between the college's mission and strategic direction was provided during the assessment team's meeting with senior staff, where it was explained that the Strategic Plan includes measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) that will be regularly reviewed to demonstrate academic governance's effectiveness and alignment with the college's goals. The Dean also highlighted that the Governance Board is structured to support independent oversight, with a focus on reviewing the Strategic Plan and maintaining strong academic governance.
55. The assessment team concluded that the college's higher education mission and strategic direction, as outlined in the 'Strategic Plan 2024-2029 UK' and the 'Learning and Teaching Strategy', are coherent and likely to be consistently applied. While mechanisms for monitoring staff and student understanding of these policies are in place, evidence to confirm that these policies are published and understood will need to be provided during the probationary period.<sup>10</sup>
56. To assess how the college's academic policies will support its higher education mission, aims, and objectives, the assessment team reviewed key documents including the 'Strategic

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<sup>10</sup> As set out in footnote 9, the college confirmed on 6 December 2024 that these documents are now published on its website.

Plan 2024-2029 UK', 'Quality Assurance System', 'Risk Management Policy', and the 'Terms of Reference: Governance Board, Academic Board and Board of Studies'.

57. The assessment team found that the policies outlined in the 'Strategic Plan 2024-2029 UK' align with the college's mission of providing high-quality, industry-relevant education. This mission will be further supported by the 'Quality Assurance System' [010a], which identifies mechanisms for continuous improvement, such as 'Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures' and 'External Examining Policy and Procedures' to demonstrate a framework for maintaining high educational standards through regular reviews and approvals by the Governance and Academic Boards. Additionally, the 'Risk Management Policy' provides a structured approach to identifying and mitigating risks associated with achieving academic goals, thereby reinforcing the college's overall mission of becoming a leader in engineering education.
58. The Governance and Academic Boards will be responsible for overseeing the consistent application of academic policies in alignment with the college's strategic objectives. The 'Terms of Reference: Governance Board, Academic Board and Board of Studies' outline their future roles in reviewing and approving key academic policies, including those related to assessment regulations, student protection, and quality assurance. These policies are designed to be applied consistently and will be regularly reviewed to maintain alignment with the college's mission and strategic priorities. The assessment team concluded that the governance structures in place should provide sufficient oversight of academic policies and processes necessary to support the college's higher education mission and objectives as they are implemented.
59. Based on this evidence, the assessment team concluded that the college's academic policies are designed to support its higher education mission, aims and objectives, and that its governance structures are intended to ensure the consistent application and alignment of these policies with the college's strategic direction.
60. To determine whether the college has clarity and differentiation of function and responsibility at all levels in relation to its academic governance structures and arrangements for managing its higher education provision, the assessment team reviewed several key documents including the 'Terms of Reference: Governance Board, Academic Board and Board of Studies', the 'ECT Organisational Chart' and the 'Job Description for a Course Leader'.
61. The assessment team concluded that the 'Terms of Reference: Governance Board, Academic Board and Board of Studies' clearly outline the distinct roles and responsibilities of each board. The Governance Board will be responsible for the strategic oversight of the college, ensuring alignment with the college's overall mission and long-term goals. In contrast, the Academic Board will focus on academic matters, including the approval of programmes, assessment regulations, and academic quality assurance processes. This separation of responsibilities is expected to ensure that academic governance operates effectively and that decisions regarding higher education provision will be managed appropriately at all levels.
62. The 'ECT Organisational Chart' provides additional clarity by visually illustrating the lines of accountability and reporting structures across the college. The roles of senior leaders, such as the Dean and the Higher Education Manager, are clearly defined in relation to both

academic governance and operational management. This distinction is further supported by the 'Job Description for a Course Leader', which details responsibilities for overseeing academic delivery and supporting students while ensuring alignment with college policies.

63. Further confirmation of the clarity and differentiation of function between the Governance and Academic Boards was provided during the meeting with senior staff. The structuring of these boards, with a focus on independence and distinct roles, supports the effective separation of strategic oversight by the Governance Board and academic decision-making by the Academic Board.
64. Based on this evidence, the assessment team concluded that there is clear differentiation of function and responsibility at all levels within the college. The academic governance structures, combined with clearly defined roles and reporting lines, are expected to provide effective management of higher education provision and support decision-making processes that align with the college's mission and objectives.
65. To test whether the function and responsibility of the senior academic authority at the college are clearly articulated and consistently applied, the assessment team reviewed the 'Terms of Reference: Governance Board, Academic Board and Board of Studies', along with the profiles of senior academic staff and 'Strategic Plan 2024-2029 UK'.
66. The assessment team found that the Terms of Reference for the Governance and Academic Boards clearly outline the Academic Board's role as the senior academic authority within the college.
67. The college's 'Strategic Plan 2024-2029 UK' further articulates the function of the senior academic authority. The plan outlines the college's long-term academic objectives and emphasises the responsibilities of senior leadership in achieving these goals. Specifically, the plan highlights the pivotal role of the Academic Board in aligning the college's academic mission with both internal academic quality assurance processes and external academic standards.
68. Additionally, the assessment team examined the profiles of senior academic staff to assess the qualifications and experience of those in senior academic leadership roles. The review confirmed that senior academic leaders, including the Dean and other key members of the Academic Board, possess the requisite expertise to effectively oversee academic governance.
69. Based on this evidence, the assessment team concluded that the function and responsibility of the senior academic authority at the college are clearly articulated through formal governance documents, with a credible plan for their consistent application. Discussions with senior staff reinforced the team's confidence that senior academic leaders, including the Dean, will oversee academic governance effectively and consistently in line with the college's mission and objectives.
70. To assess whether there is appropriate depth and strength of academic leadership at the college, the assessment team reviewed:
  - the 'ECT Organisational Chart'

- the 'ECT Staff Spreadsheet'
- the board and academic staff profiles
- CVs of Governance Board members, Academic Board Members, senior managers, course leaders and lecturers.

71. As described in [paragraph 20](#), the college will initially rely on the experienced staff base of its Australian sister company for roles including the Dean, course leaders, Academic Resources Manager and lecturers. Before commencing delivery of the proposed programmes, the staff base will be supplemented by a Head of College (incorporating the role of Higher Education Manager and Quality & Compliance Manager) and specialised EIT staff will be replaced within the first six months.
72. The 'ECT Organisational Chart' illustrates that the senior leadership team at the college will be headed by both the Dean and the Head of College, who will be directly accountable to the Governance Board. The Dean is expected to oversee key academic roles, while the Head of College will provide oversight of professional positions, establishing a well-structured leadership framework that promotes accountability and governance across both academic and operational domains. According to the New DAPs plan, the Head of College will initially incorporate the roles of Higher Education Manager and Quality & Compliance Manager, a structure that the assessment team found feasible and appropriate at the outset, given the college's plans to enrol a small number of students initially (see [paragraph 25](#) for more information).
73. The assessment team's review of the profiles of senior academic leaders revealed that the college's founding senior academic leadership team possesses significant experience and expertise across various sectors of higher education and industry. For example, the college's interim Dean has extensive academic and professional experience, including over ten years as the current Dean of EIT and as the former Technical Director for a technology training company. The Chair of the Academic Board possesses extensive experience in accreditation processes of engineering programmes and has served as an academic accreditor for the UK Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), showcasing his commitment to maintaining educational quality and standards. The interim course leader for the proposed BEng (Honours) in Electrical Engineering programme has nearly seven years' experience working as a course coordinator and lecturer for a bachelors' and masters' degree programme at EIT and has undertaken extensive research in electrical engineering.
74. The assessment team also reviewed the CVs of Australian-based interim course leaders and lecturers and found that many of the teaching staff possess advanced degrees and have significant industrial experience relevant to engineering and the content of the proposed programmes. The assessment team found the initial academic team to be well-qualified and suitable to teach on the proposed programmes. This reinforced the assessment team's confidence that the college recognises the academic requirements for teaching staff and that the new UK-based staff will be suitably qualified and supported.
75. The New DAPs plan states that EIT staff will provide support and mentorship to the newly recruited UK-based academic and senior staff, aiding in their transition and integration into the college's academic environment. This support aligns with a recruitment process that

requires candidates to have relevant qualifications, skills and experience in their engineering disciplines. Additionally, the college has outlined a commitment to ongoing professional development and scholarly activities for academic staff, contributing to the strength of the college's academic leadership. The assessment team's view is that this planned structure will effectively support and strengthen the college's academic leadership.

76. Based on this evidence, the assessment team concluded that there is appropriate depth and strength of academic leadership at the time of the assessment. The college is supported by a senior leadership team with extensive experience and clear reporting lines, providing a foundation for effective academic governance and management of higher education provision. However, with the majority of senior roles expected to be filled by new staff, some before the commencement of course delivery and others within the first 12 months of delivery, the assessment team recommends that the appropriateness of academic leadership is monitored and further evidence provided by the college once the new leadership and academic teams are established.
77. To assess whether the college will successfully manage the responsibilities vested in it were it to be granted degree awarding powers, the assessment team reviewed key documents including:
  - the 'Strategic Plan 2024-2029 UK'
  - the 'Quality Assurance System' and 'Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Flowchart'
  - the 'Terms of Reference: Governance Board, Academic Board and Board of Studies'
  - the 'Course and Industry Advisory Committee Terms of Reference'.
78. The college has demonstrated its capacity and preparedness to effectively manage its higher education provision through the governance structures outlined in its Strategic Plan. The plan articulates the college's commitment to maintaining high academic standards, assuring quality, and providing a coherent vision for its higher education provision.
79. The assessment team found that the 'Quality Assurance System' outlines a comprehensive framework for maintaining and enhancing the quality of the college's academic provision. The system is supported by a range of policies and procedures that address key areas such as curriculum development, assessment, and continuous improvement. These documents establish a consistent approach to meeting internal academic standards and external regulatory requirements throughout the teaching and learning cycle. Furthermore, the 'Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Flow Chart' provides a clear visual representation of how continuous improvement processes will be implemented and monitored, helping the system remain responsive and effective in maintaining academic quality.
80. Additionally, the 'Terms of Reference: Governance Board, Academic Board and Board of Studies' provide a detailed framework for overseeing academic standards and maintaining effective governance. The presence of key committees, including the Academic Board and its subcommittees, with representation from both staff and students, demonstrates that the college has a well-structured and transparent approach to managing its academic

responsibilities. This governance structure confirms that academic decisions will be made with appropriate oversight and input from relevant stakeholders.

81. In addition, the college has established a framework for active engagement with external stakeholders through the 'Course and Industry Advisory Committee Terms of Reference', which is expected to play a crucial role in informing the development and review of academic provision. This demonstrates that the college has mechanisms in place to ensure that its academic provision remains aligned with industry standards, professional requirements and external expectations, further supporting its readiness to manage the responsibilities associated with degree awarding powers.
82. Discussions with senior staff further confirmed that the college's academic provision will be aligned with external frameworks, such as the Engineering Council's Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes fourth edition (AHEP4) and the Quality Assurance Agency for UK Higher Education (QAA) subject benchmark statement for engineering. Additionally, the structure of the Academic Board and the role of external reviews were highlighted as central to maintaining academic quality and aligning with industry expectations.
83. Based on the evidence reviewed, the assessment team concluded that the college's academic governance structures, as demonstrated through its strategic oversight, academic quality assurance mechanisms, and engagement with external stakeholders, provide credible assurance that the college will successfully manage the responsibilities vested in it were it to be granted degree awarding powers.

## Subcriterion A1.2

**A1.2: Academic governance, including all aspects of the control and oversight of its higher education provision, is conducted in partnership with its students.**

### Advice to the OfS

84. The assessment team's view is that the New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion A1.2 because it demonstrates that the college's academic governance, including all aspects of the control and oversight of its higher education provision, is designed to be conducted in partnership with its students.
85. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion A1.2 because it has established clear structures and plans for engaging students individually and collectively in the governance and management of the organisation.
86. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence, which shows that the college can be reasonably expected to meet the evidence requirements for A1.2 in full by the end of the probationary period.

## Reasoning

87. To test whether the college will develop, implement, and communicate its policies and procedures in collaboration with its staff, students and external stakeholders, the assessment team reviewed key documents including:
- the 'Terms of Reference – Governance and Academic Boards'
  - the 'ECT Strategic Plan UK 2024-2029'
  - the 'End of Study Period Survey'
  - the 'External Examining Policy and Procedures'
  - the 'Terms of Reference – Learning and Teaching Committee'
  - the 'Student Council Terms of Reference'
  - the 'Policy Development and Review Policy'.
88. The assessment team noted that the 'Terms of Reference – Governance and Academic Boards' clearly outline the inclusion of staff and student representatives in key governance boards and subcommittees. These representatives are expected to participate in the development of academic policies and play an active role in discussions regarding the college's higher education provision. For example, the Academic Board and its subcommittees, including the Learning and Teaching Committee, involve academic staff and student representatives. This structure provides a framework for incorporating the perspectives of both staff and students into policy decisions, supporting transparency and inclusion in governance processes.
89. Additionally, the 'Student Council Terms of Reference' demonstrate a clear framework for involving students in discussions about their academic experience, including providing feedback on policies and procedures. The Student Council is designed to serve as a platform for students to communicate their views on learning and the student experience to the college. Although the college has not yet enrolled students, this structure indicates that future students will have an active role in shaping academic policies through representation on key boards and committees, such as the Academic Board and the Learning and Teaching Committee. Furthermore, the New DAPs plan outlines that the 'ECT End of Study Period Survey' will be a key feedback mechanism through which students will evaluate aspects such as teaching quality, assessments and academic support. Findings from this survey will be reported to the Board of Studies, and important issues will be forwarded to the Academic Board for decisions on actions required. This system is designed to gather student feedback for consideration in policy decisions, facilitating a collaborative approach to policy development and communication.
90. The college's framework for engaging external examiners is outlined in the 'External Examining Policy and Procedures', which describes how they will contribute to the review of academic standards and assessment processes. This engagement supports alignment with industry standards and contributes to maintaining the quality and relevance of academic policies and procedures.

91. The 'Policy Development and Review Policy' demonstrates a systematic approach to involving staff, students and external stakeholders in policy creation and revision. The policy outlines a phased process that includes consultation and collaboration with these groups, reflecting a commitment to inclusivity and ongoing policy development.
92. Discussions with senior staff confirmed that student representatives will participate in governance via the Student Council and VLE platform. Staff collaboration will take place via an open-door policy for discussing key policies, with further support provided through regular continuing professional development (CPD) meetings. External examiners and industry feedback will also contribute to curriculum development, ensuring alignment with professional standards, FHEQ and AHEP4.
93. Based on the evidence, the assessment team concluded that the college has established a collaborative and transparent framework for the development, implementation and communication of its policies and procedures. The planned involvement of staff, students and external stakeholders is structured to support a participatory academic governance process.
94. To assess whether the college's plans will engage students individually and collectively in the governance and management of the organisation and its higher education provision, the assessment team reviewed evidence including the terms of reference for the Student Council and Learning and Teaching Committee, the 'Student Support Policy', 'Student Representative Council Induction' and feedback mechanism outlined in the 'End of Study Period Survey'.
95. The assessment team found that the college has established formal structures for student engagement in academic governance processes. The Student Council will serve as a key mechanism for student representation, with the President of the Student Council serving as a member of the Academic Board and the Learning and Teaching Committee. This structure indicates that students will have an active and formalised role in governance, contributing their perspectives on academic policies, course reviews, and other matters related to their educational experience.
96. The 'Student Support Policy' and the 'Student Representative Council Induction' outline the college's approach to preparing and supporting students in their participation in governance. These documents describe initiatives aimed at fostering an inclusive environment, enabling students to engage effectively in the governance and management of their academic experience.
97. Student representatives will also be supported through induction sessions and regular meetings with staff to address student-related matters, as described in the 'Student Representative Council Induction'. The document provides an overview of the induction process, including an introduction to governance structures, the roles and responsibilities of representatives, and guidelines for their participation in meetings. It also outlines the available support to prepare student representatives for meaningful contributions to academic governance and the ongoing enhancement of the student experience.
98. As set out in [paragraph 92](#), senior staff confirmed that student representatives will participate in governance through the Student Council and VLE platforms. They also stated that collective feedback from the entire cohort will be gathered through surveys, such as the end

of study period survey, reinforcing the college's commitment to student engagement in governance processes.

99. Based on the evidence provided, the assessment team concluded that the college demonstrates clear structures and support mechanisms to engage students both individually and collectively in the governance and management of the organisation, which will enable students to contribute meaningfully to the continuous improvement of their educational experience.

### Subcriterion A1.3

**A1.3: Where an organisation granted degree awarding powers works with other organisations to deliver learning opportunities, it ensures that its governance and management of such opportunities is robust and effective and that decisions to work with other organisations are the result of a strategic approach rather than opportunism.**

#### Advice to the OfS

100. The assessment team's view is that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion A1.3 because it has established a structured and strategic approach to managing partnerships that will contribute to delivering learning opportunities.
101. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion A1.3 because it has developed clear frameworks and agreements with industry partners to support student placements and work-integrated learning.
102. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence, which shows that the college can be reasonably expected to meet the evidence requirements for A1.3 in full by the end of the probationary period.

#### Reasoning

103. The assessment team considered several key documents to assess whether the college has established a strategic and structured approach to the governance and management of partnerships in delivering learning opportunities. The documents reviewed include the 'Internship MOU with Host Employer', the 'Industrial Experience Supervisor Review' form and the 'Student Protection Plan'.
104. The college's New DAPs plan outlines its broader strategy for partnerships and industry engagement. The college details the requirement for students to complete 240 hours of industrial work experience, which may involve various placements in engineering settings.
105. The 'Internship MOU [memorandum of understanding] with Host Employer' provides a formal framework for establishing partnerships with employers who will offer industrial placements to students. This document clearly defines the mutual obligations of both the college and the employer, with a focus on aligning the industrial experience with academic standards. This memorandum of understanding demonstrates the college's commitment to managing

strategic partnerships that will enhance student employability and contribute to the delivery of meaningful learning opportunities.

106. Further reinforcing this framework, the 'Industrial Experience Supervisor Review' form outlines procedures for evaluating student progress during industrial placements. It provides a template for assessing the performance of students in various key areas during their placements, to ensure that student progress will be effectively monitored.
107. The 'Student Protection Plan' provides additional evidence of the college's management of risks associated with partnership arrangements. It outlines specific measures designed to protect students' learning continuity in the event of any potential disruptions, thus safeguarding academic standards and learning outcomes. The plan reflects the college's readiness to maintain the integrity of its academic provision within the context of partnerships, aligning with regulatory expectations for partnership management.
108. Discussions with senior staff confirmed that the college is actively seeking industry partnerships to facilitate work placements and enhance the learning experience for students. Additionally, student feedback regarding their experiences with industry placements will be incorporated to ensure these partnerships meet educational needs.
109. Based on the evidence provided, the assessment team formed the view that the college has demonstrated an ability to effectively govern its partnership arrangements.

## **Conclusions**

110. The assessment team formed the view that the college has established effective academic governance structures, as demonstrated by its clear lines of accountability and differentiated roles. The Academic Board, supported by subcommittees, is positioned to provide oversight for academic quality, policies and procedures, ensuring that academic governance is appropriately managed.
111. The assessment team also concluded that the college's governance framework includes provisions for student engagement. Mechanisms are in place to facilitate student participation in governance processes, and the inclusion of student representatives on the Academic Board and subcommittees will support this. These plans indicate that the college is prepared to engage students in its academic governance.
112. Furthermore, the assessment team determined that the college has demonstrated plans for a structured approach to managing partnerships with external organisations. The framework for industrial placements, including formal agreements with employers and detailed guidance for evaluating student progress, supports the college's commitment to maintaining high standards in partnership arrangements.
113. Based on its findings, the team concluded that the college has a credible New DAPs plan and demonstrated a full understanding of criterion A1 which can be reasonably expected to enable the college to meet this criterion in full by the end of the probationary period.
114. As the New DAPs plan comprehensively meets the requirements of this criterion, the assessment team did not identify any specified changes to the plan. However, the team identified developments which should be monitored during the monitoring assessment in year

one and which the college should provide an update on in its first quarterly self-assessment submission. These include:

- Updated staff profiles and confirmation that key roles have been filled as per the timelines outlined in the 'ECT Organisational Chart', with particular focus on the Dean, Head of College, course leaders, and other senior academic positions.
- Evidence of student engagement in governance, including confirmation that student representatives are in place and actively participating in the relevant academic governance committees such as the Academic Board and its subcommittees.

# Assessment of DAPs criterion B: Academic standards and quality assurance

## Criterion B1: Regulatory frameworks

### Advice to the OfS

115. The assessment team's view is that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion B1: Regulatory frameworks.
116. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion B1.
117. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence. In summary, this shows that the college has developed transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how it will award academic credit and qualifications.
118. This view is based on specific consideration of the supporting evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

### Subcriterion B1.1

**B1.1: An organisation granted degree awarding powers has in place transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how it awards academic credit and qualifications.**

### Advice to the OfS

119. The assessment team's view is that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion B1.1 because it has in place transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how it will award academic credit and qualifications.
120. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion B1.1 because it has established transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how it will award academic credit and qualifications.
121. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence, which shows that the college can be reasonably expected to meet the evidence requirements for B1.1 in full by the end of the probationary period.

### Reasoning

122. To determine whether the college has in place transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how it plans to award academic credit and qualifications, the assessment team reviewed the following documents:
- 'Academic Regulations Manual'

- 'Quality Assurance System: Policies, Procedures and Key Documents' and 'Quality Assurance – Continuous Improvement Flow Chart'
- 'Course and Industry Advisory Committee Terms of Reference'
- 'Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedures'
- 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Policy' and procedures
- 'Award Nomenclature and Academic Records Policy'
- 'Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedures'
- 'EIT\_ECT\_Deed of Undertaking'
- programme and associated module specifications from Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 for the four proposed programmes and the associated 'Comprehensive Course Structures'.

123. The assessment team considered that the college has established clear, credible and comprehensive sets of academic regulations which set out the principles for student admissions; student engagement with study; assessment and progression; outcome qualifications; and academic freedom and integrity. The regulations are underpinned by comprehensive quality assurance processes, as set out in the college's 'Quality Assurance System' document. These are supplemented by a framework for continuous improvement.

124. The college's academic regulations have been developed based on the experiences derived from the college's sister company, EIT, which has an established track record of delivering online and on-campus higher education programmes in engineering in Australia and internationally. As set out in paragraph 20, EIT will provide ongoing support during the college's initial period of operation. This will include access to the online technologies for programme delivery that EIT has developed, along with the expertise of EIT's academic, technical and support staff. There is also a financial guarantee for five years to protect students enrolled on the college's programmes. The extensive experience of programme delivery and ongoing support that will be provided by EIT enable the team to have confidence in the college's ability to deliver on these frameworks.

125. The 'Academic Regulations Manual' covers the college's full set of regulatory frameworks, including:

- student admission processes and the associated granting of credit
- the application of fees and availability of scholarships
- student participation in learning activities
- modes of assessment
- marking practices
- appeal processes and the operation of Assessment Boards

- student progression and award
- academic freedom, ethical conduct and academic integrity.

126. The college states, and the assessment team was able to confirm through its review, that these regulations, as drafted, comply with the OfS's regulatory framework<sup>11</sup> and are comparable to those in operation at other UK higher education providers. Furthermore, the college's Quality and Compliance Manager, in consultation with senior staff including the Dean, will be responsible for updating the regulations on an annual basis.
127. The processes regulating student admissions are set out in the 'Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedures' and the 'Academic Regulations Manual'. The policy's principles set out that students admitted to the proposed programmes will have the academic preparation and proficiency in English and mathematics needed to enable them to engage effectively in their studies, and that the relevant criteria are set out in the programme specifications.
128. The applications processes will be managed by the college independently of UCAS, with prospective students applying directly to the college. The assessment team noted that applications will be reviewed by the Admissions Officers, in consultation with the Admissions Committee, in line with the specified selection criteria. This led the team to consider that admissions decisions will thereby be applied fairly, consistently and in a timely manner. Successful applicants will be notified by a 'Letter of Offer', with details of any conditions to be fulfilled, together with details of tuition and other fees. Unsuccessful applicants will be advised regarding the process for appealing against admissions decisions in accordance with the 'Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy'.
129. The college has also defined the processes for the recognition of prior certificated or experiential learning. Such applications will be assessed by the relevant programme's course leader.
130. The assessment team considered that the proposed policies for the admission of students appear credible and comprehensive. They align with those of comparable UK higher education providers and the expectations of the Engineering Council and IET (the proposed professional statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) to which application for accreditation will be made). These policies are also based on processes already established and operated by EIT.
131. As the college is a new higher education provider and is not yet delivering its proposed programmes, the team was unable to confirm that the policies are implemented fully and consistently. However, the team formed the view that the documentation it considered demonstrates an appropriate understanding of the criterion.
132. The college has approved a set of regulations governing the processes for assessment and progression as defined in the 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Policy' and the 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Procedures'. These documents define the responsibilities of individual members of staff and of respective boards and committees in relation to assessment design, marking and moderation, and confirm that the Academic Board has overall responsibility for all aspects of assessment, progression and moderation. In

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<sup>11</sup> Available at [Regulatory framework for higher education in England - Office for Students](#).

discharging its responsibilities, the Academic Board will delegate authority to the module and programme assessment boards, and the Quality Assurance Committee.

133. The policy document defines the different types of assessment in addition to the processes in place for maintaining the integrity of assessments. This includes presentation of proof of identification, the use of IRIS invigilation software and the remote observation of specific exercises. At the time of the visit, staff informed the assessment team that the college does not yet have the IRIS invigilation software in place, though it is already operational at the sister college and staff have experience in its use. The team noted that the college would need consider the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements prior to introduction of the software and therefore effective implementation of the IRIS software will need to be confirmed during the initial stages of the probationary period.
134. The assessment team was able to confirm that the college has established a robust process for internal and external moderation of assessment. This includes the requirement that briefs for assessments which will contribute significantly towards the final degree classification should be sent to the relevant programme's external examiner, along with model answers for approval. The planned process for moderation of students' work, including sampling and double marking, is likewise robust and comparable with that established in other UK providers. This incorporates both independent internal moderation and moderation by the external examiner.
135. The college states a requirement for all assessments to be defined through assessment briefs, designed to map against the module learning outcomes and have clear marking criteria, these being set out in specific marking rubrics. At the start of each academic year, all module descriptors and assessment briefs will be made available to the students.
136. In the meeting with senior staff, the assessment team was informed that there was top-down mapping of the programme learning outcomes across the module learning outcomes. These have been linked to Bloom's Taxonomy, a framework which categorises the educational developmental goals from the acquisition of knowledge through to the ability to critically evaluate information and create knowledge. The assessment team was able to confirm this through its review of the programme and module specifications.
137. The college reported that the programme specifications were drafted with reference to the FHEQ, QAA subject benchmark statement for Engineering<sup>12</sup> and the expectations of the Engineering Council, as set out in AHEP4. It further provided evidence to demonstrate how alignment with the FHEQ was independently confirmed during programme approval, through the external review process. The assessment team was also able to confirm that the programme specifications for the proposed programmes are aligned with the expectations of the FHEQ for the Level 6 and 7 awards, respectively.
138. The assessment team considered that the rules for progression are clearly defined and align with other higher education providers. It was noted that compensation may be applied in accordance with the regulatory frameworks of the Engineering Council that apply to the accreditation of the programmes. The team further identified that condonement will not be

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<sup>12</sup> See QAA, [Subject Benchmark Statement - Engineering](#).

permitted under the AHEP4 regulations, therefore all students must achieve a pass mark for all modules in order to progress.

139. The assessment procedures and mitigating circumstances policy and procedure also set out clearly defined processes for consideration of mitigating circumstances and the application of extensions and/or additional considerations.
140. The college will operate external examining to provide external evaluation of the quality and standards of the academic provision. External examiners will be appointed by the Academic Board. Their remit will be to determine whether the standards for the courses meet the requirements of the national qualifications framework, to include providing confidence judgements regarding the value of the qualifications at the point of award and in future in line with sector-recognised standards. They will also be required to review documentation to determine whether the courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience and enable students' achievements to be reliably assessed. As such the external examiners will be members of Assessment and Programme Boards.
141. The team was able to conclude that the policies for managing assessments and student progression appear credible and comprehensive as they are built on the experience of the college's sister company, are comparable with those of UK higher education providers and are aligned with external reference points. As the college is not yet delivering its higher education programmes however, the team was unable to confirm at this stage that the policies are implemented fully and consistently.
142. The 'Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy' and the 'Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Procedures' set out definitions of the scope of complaints and appeals and how they will be managed by the college. The assessment team identified that the procedures have been informed by reference to the guidance from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). For both complaints and appeals there are two proposed streams of resolution: informal and formal. In the case of the formal route, the college sets out the processes for consideration of the complaint or appeal and the associated timelines for the different stages. The team was informed that support for students wishing to submit an appeal or complaint will be provided by the Learning Support Officers (LSOs) as the first point of contact.
143. The assessment team noted that the complaints processes described in the procedures document combine complaints and grievances on the part of students as well as those on the part of staff, which it considered could lead to a lack of clarity. While the overall policies are comparable with those of other UK higher education providers, the team concluded that there should be separation of the complaints and grievances policies for staff and students (see also [paragraph 243](#)). As the college has yet to commence delivery of its higher education programmes, the team was unable to confirm that students understand the processes, are fully informed regarding available support, and that the policies are implemented fully, consistently and in a timely manner.
144. The college has drafted and approved programme specifications for the four programmes to be offered, along with the associated module maps, regulations and assessment frameworks.

145. The assessment team reviewed the programme specifications and associated module specifications and as noted in paragraph 137, was able to confirm that these align with the expectations of the FHEQ. The four proposed programmes have also been aligned to the Engineering Council's degree accreditation process (AHEP4) with the aim of gaining PSRB accreditation through IET once the programmes have become established. The adoption of these external points of reference, along with the QAA subject benchmark statement for engineering, and alignment with the FHEQ, should ensure that the programmes are benchmarked against the relevant academic and industrial standards.
146. The college states that the process of programme development is delegated by the Academic Board to the Course and Industry Advisory Committee (CIAC). The membership of the CIAC will include an external chair and professional/industry representative(s) to provide relevant externality to the development process. The approval of the new course is also subject to review by an external assessor.
147. The proposed suite of programmes has been developed in accordance with the 'Course Development Policy and Procedures'. It has been reviewed by an external assessor and approved by the Academic Board and Governance Board, both of which also have external membership. However, at the time of the visit, the assessment team was informed that the Quality Assurance Committee and CIAC had yet to be established in the form in which they currently operate in EIT. The assessment team therefore formed the view that there is requirement that the college evidences the establishment of the Quality Assurance Committee and CIAC in its first quarterly self-assessment submission, and confirms that the latter has an appropriate level of external membership, in order to comply with requirements of its policy and procedures for approval.
148. The assessment team also noted that, at the time of the visit, the proposed programmes had yet to undergo final validation as the college was awaiting the outcome of the New DAPs assessment before completing the quality assurance procedures. The team agreed that validation of the programmes will need to be completed in line with the college's procedures and receive subsequent approval by the Academic Board prior to admission of students and delivery of the four programmes.
149. The course specifications set out the entry criteria, aims and intended programme learning outcomes for each programme. Each module has been mapped against the relevant programme's intended learning outcomes and specifies the mode of assessment and which learning outcome(s) will be assessed. The generic criteria for award of the relevant qualifications are set out in the 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Procedures' and the 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Procedures'.
150. In conclusion, the assessment team formed the view that the college has in place transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how it will award academic credit and qualifications. During the probationary period, the college will need to:
- demonstrate effective implementation of its academic frameworks and regulation
  - confirm the establishment of the Quality Assurance Committee and CIAC
  - confirm the validation of the programmes before students can be admitted onto them.

## Subcriterion B1.2

**B1.2: A degree awarding organisation maintains a definitive record of each programme and qualification that it approves (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.**

### Advice to the OfS

151. The assessment team's view is that the New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion B1.2 because the college has in place appropriate plans for maintaining a definitive record of each programme and qualification that it approves, and of approving and recording subsequent changes to it. These plans will constitute a reference point for the delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.
152. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion B1.2 because it has established processes for maintaining a definitive record of each programme and qualification that it approves (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.
153. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence, which shows that the college can be reasonably expected to meet the evidence requirements for B1.2 in full by the end of the probationary period.

### Reasoning

154. To determine whether the college maintains a definitive record of each programme and associated qualifications that it approves, the assessment team reviewed:
- programme documentation for the college's four proposed programmes
  - the 'Academic Regulations Manual'
  - the 'Course Development Policy and Procedures', 'Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy', 'Course Review and Quality Assurance Procedures' and 'Course and Module Review Flow Chart'
  - the 'Award Nomenclature and Academic Records Policy'
  - 'External Review Reports' for the proposed programmes
  - the 'Module Descriptor – Changes and Approvals Process'.
155. The college has drafted and approved programme specifications for the four programmes to be offered. The programme and associated module specifications reviewed by the team set out the intended learning outcomes for the programmes and the associated course structure.

The assessment team was able to confirm that these specifications align with the expectations of the FHEQ at Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7, respectively, as was also confirmed by the reports from the external reviewers.

156. Underpinning the programme are the constituent sets of modules which are also defined within the programme documentation. The assessment team reviewed the module specifications and found that each module has a set of aims and learning outcomes along with details of the indicative content, assessment methods and the mapping of each assessment against the learning outcomes. The team also found that the programme specifications show the mapping of the module learning outcomes against the programme learning outcomes.
157. The assessment team was able to confirm that the process of programme approval had been undertaken in alignment with the college's 'Course Development Policy and Procedures', insofar as the proposed programmes have been approved by the Governance and Academic Boards following review by an external assessor. At the time of the visit, the Quality Assurance Committee and CIAC had yet to be established, but the team was able to derive assurance regarding the levels of oversight given that the Academic and Governance Boards also have external membership as well as industrial expertise.
158. The assessment team also formed the view that the college has drafted a credible process for the monitoring and review of the proposed programmes and for approving programme changes. This view was based on the team's observation that the processes will include consideration of student progression, completion and award, feedback from students and staff, reports from external academics and industrial advisers and professional accreditation reports, with appropriate benchmarking. The college also plans to implement governance processes whereby the outcomes of the monitoring and review processes will be considered by the Quality Assurance Committee and the CIAC, with reporting to the Academic Board. This will also be required to approve any major programme modifications.
159. The assessment team reviewed the proposed process for establishing the title of the awards to be made, as set out in the 'Award Nomenclature and Academic Awards Policy'. This policy confirms the title of the award as being established through the process of course development. Students who achieve the required credits for the awards (360 credits for bachelors' degree and 180 for masters' degree qualifications) will be issued with an individual degree certificate and an academic transcript that details the awarding body and the full title of the award. Although the college is yet to commence programme delivery, the assessment team concluded that the processes as defined in the college's New DAPs plan and associated policies are in line with other UK higher education providers.

## **Conclusions**

160. The assessment team concluded that the college has in place transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how it will award academic credit and qualifications. It further has in place credible plans for maintaining a definitive record of each programme and qualification that it approves (and of subsequent changes to it), which constitute the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

161. At the time of the assessment, the proposed programmes had not yet undergone final validation and no programme delivery had taken place; therefore, the full and consistent implementation of the college's regulations and maintenance of its records of each qualification could not yet be confirmed. These processes should be further reviewed during any subsequent monitoring assessment. As noted above, validation of the programmes will be a requirement for delivery of the programmes.
162. Based on its findings, the team concluded that the college has a credible New DAPs plan and demonstrated a full understanding of criterion B1 which can be reasonably expected to enable the college to meet this criterion in full by the end of the probationary period.
163. As the New DAPs plan comprehensively meets the requirements of this criterion, the assessment team did not identify any specified changes to the plan. However, the team did identify activity which the college should provide an update on in its first quarterly self-assessment submission and which should be reviewed during the monitoring assessment in year one. This includes:
- implementation of the academic frameworks and regulations including the processes for programme validation, student admissions, and the appointment of external examiners and the process for considering external examiner feedback
  - establishment and operation of the Quality Assurance Committee and the CIAC
  - the award of credit and maintenance of academic transcripts.

## Criterion B2: Academic standards

### Advice to the OfS

164. The assessment team's view is that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion B2: Academic standards.
165. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion B2.
166. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows in summary that the college will have clear and consistently applied mechanisms for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its higher education qualifications. Furthermore, the team's view is that the college is able to design and will be able to deliver courses and qualifications that meet the threshold academic standards described in the FHEQ. The college also has in place processes to enable it to set and maintain standards above the threshold that are reliable over time and reasonably comparable to those set and achieved by other UK degree awarding bodies.
167. This view is based on specific consideration of the supporting evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

### Subcriterion B2.1

**B2.1: An organisation granted degree awarding powers has clear and consistently applied mechanisms for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its higher education qualifications.**

### Advice to the OfS

168. The assessment team's view is that the New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion B2.1 because it sets out plans for how academic standards will be set by the intended start of date of the probationary powers, and how the college will set and maintain academic standards through clear and consistently applied mechanisms.
169. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated an understanding of criterion B2.1 because it has developed policies and procedures which will enable it to establish clear and consistently applied mechanisms for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its higher education qualifications.
170. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence, which shows that the college can be reasonably expected to meet the evidence requirements for B1.2 in full by the end of the probationary period.

### Reasoning

171. To determine whether the college has developed clear and consistently applied mechanisms for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its higher education qualifications, the assessment team reviewed:

- the 'Academic Regulations Manual'
- 'Course Development Policy and Procedures' and 'New Course Development Process Flow Diagram'
- 'Quality Assurance System: Policies, Procedures and Key Documents' and 'Quality assurance – Continuous Improvement Flow Chart'
- 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Policy and Procedures'
- the 'Course and Industry Advisory Committee Terms of Reference'
- programme specifications and associated module specifications from Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7 for the four proposed programmes
- the comprehensive course structures
- the 'BEng Honours Qualifications – FHEQ Alignment' and 'MSc Qualifications – FHEQ Alignment'
- external assessor reports.

172. The arrangements for programme approval are set out in detail in the 'Course Development Policy and Procedures' documentation. The process of programme development will be delegated by Academic Board to the CIAC, the membership of which will include an external chair and professional/industry representative(s) thereby providing relevant externality to the development process. At the time of the assessment, the CIAC had not yet been established. As a result, approval of the four proposed programmes was undertaken by the Academic Board. The programmes were also subject to review by external assessors who confirmed alignment with the threshold standards of the FHEQ. The team further confirmed alignment from its own review of the programme specifications. As set out in [paragraph 147](#), the college's establishment of its CIAC will need to be confirmed during its first quarterly self-assessment submission.

173. In addition to alignment with the FHEQ, the team also identified that the design of the four programmes had been informed by the QAA subject benchmark statement for engineering and the Engineering Council's standard for degree accreditation, AHEP4. Regarding the latter, the college reported that one of the college's key aims is to gain PSRB accreditation once the programmes have become established. The adoption of these external points of reference should ensure that the programmes are benchmarked against the relevant academic and industry standards.

174. As set out in [paragraph 148](#), as the programmes have not yet undergone final validation, this will be a requirement prior to any programme delivery taking place.

## Subcriterion B2.2

**B2.2: Organisations with degree awarding powers are expected to demonstrate that they are able to design and deliver courses and qualifications that meet the threshold academic standards described in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).**

**Organisations with degree awarding powers are expected to demonstrate that the standards that they set and maintain above the threshold are reliable over time and reasonably comparable to those set and achieved by other UK degree awarding bodies.**

### Advice to the OfS

175. The assessment team's view is that the New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion B2.2 because the college is able to design and can be reasonably expected to be able to deliver courses and qualifications that meet the threshold academic standards described in the FHEQ. The college is also able to demonstrate that the standards that it sets above the threshold are reasonably comparable to those set and achieved by other UK degree awarding bodies. The college has also set out credible plans for how it will ensure that the standards it sets above the threshold will be maintained and will be reliable over time.
176. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion B2.2 because it is able to design courses and qualifications that will meet the threshold academic standards described in the FHEQ and which are reasonably comparable to those set and achieved by other UK degree awarding bodies.
177. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence which shows that the college can be reasonably expected to meet the evidence requirements for B2.2 in full by the end of the probationary period.

### Reasoning

178. To determine whether the college has developed clear and consistently applied mechanisms for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its higher education qualifications, and to confirm that these are offered at levels that correspond to the relevant levels of the FHEQ, the assessment team reviewed the following documentation:
- 'Academic Regulations Manual'
  - 'Course Development Policy and Procedures'
  - 'Quality Assurance System: Policies, Procedures and Key Documents'
  - 'Benchmarking Policy' and procedures
  - 'External Examining Policy and Procedures'
  - 'Learning and Teaching Strategy'

- 'Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy' and procedures
- 'Course and Module Review Flow Chart'
- 'Job Description for a Course Leader'
- 'Module Descriptor – Changes and Approvals Process'
- programme and module specifications for the four proposed programmes, including the 'Comprehensive Course Structures'
- mapping documents demonstrating the alignment between the structures of the bachelors' and masters' programmes with the FHEQ and accreditation expectations of the 'Engineering Council's Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes'.

179. The college states that the four proposed bachelors' and masters' degree programmes are aligned to the FHEQ as set out in the 'Course Development Policy and Procedures' and 'New Course Development Process Flow Diagram'. The assessment team was able to confirm this through review of the course specification documents and the comprehensive course structures which set out the structure and composition of the programmes. Explicit mapping of the programmes against the FHEQ was further confirmed through review of the mapping documentation, through the reports from the external reviewers who explicitly referenced the alignment with the FHEQ, and through discussion with the senior staff.

180. The college has also aligned its programmes with the requirements of the Engineering Council's AHEP4 in preparation for future application for accreditation, and reference was made to the QAA subject benchmark statements in the design process. Furthermore, the Academic Board and the Governance Board have internal and/or external members with industrial expertise, thereby providing varied evidence of engagement with relevant external reference points.

181. External academic reviewers were involved in the process of programme approval: in their reports they specifically confirmed the alignment with the FHEQ threshold standards for the awards as well as to those of AHEP4. The assessment team also saw evidence that there are appropriate policies in place for the appointment of external examiners as members of assessment boards to review assessment briefs and report on the academic standards of the awards.

182. Responsibility for benchmarking the academic provision against comparable providers will be delegated to the CIAC and the Board of Studies; thereby providing mechanisms for effective oversight. There is also linkage to the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2024-2029, which specifies the aim to establish an 'innovative industry-led curriculum' with benchmarking against other higher education providers and the needs of industry and future achievement of PSRB accreditation.

183. The college has approved a set of regulations governing the processes for assessment and progression as defined in the 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Policy' and associated procedure, which detail the process for the approval of students' results and the requirements for graduation. The assessment team was able to confirm that these processes are comparable with those of other UK higher education providers and that the college plans

to implement a governance framework, with oversight by the Board of Studies, subsequent approval by the Academic Board and reporting to the Governance Board for final sign-off.

184. The responsibilities of individual members of staff and of respective boards and committees in terms of assessment design, marking and moderation are defined, with the Academic Board having overall responsibility for all aspects of assessment, progression and moderation. In discharging its responsibilities, the Academic Board will delegate authority to the Module Assessment Boards, Programme Assessment Boards and the Quality Assurance Committee, thereby providing effective governance oversight.
185. The college states a requirement for all assessments to be designed to comply with module learning outcomes and have clear marking criteria. It further states that assessments will be drafted in accordance with the college's templates and are required to be defined through assessment briefs along with associated marking rubrics. At the time of the visit, the college had not yet drafted or delivered any assessments. This will therefore require monitoring during the probationary period.
186. As set out in paragraph 138, the rules for progression are clearly defined and include the possibility for compensation (where this is permitted) within the regulatory frameworks of the Engineering Council that will apply to the accreditation of the programmes.
187. The assessment team considered the college's processes for maintaining the quality and standards of the academic programmes. These are captured in the processes for programme monitoring and review, and for approving programme changes. The team found that these processes will include consideration of student progression, completion and award, feedback from staff and students, feedback from external examiners, external panel members and industry advisers, and review of the professional accreditation reports. These processes will ensure appropriate benchmarking against higher education standards, including confirmation by external examiners of ongoing alignment with the FHEQ. The reports arising from the monitoring and review processes will be considered by the Quality Assurance Committee and CIAC with reporting to the Academic Board for approval. The Academic Board, which includes external academic and industrial members, will also be required to approve any major modifications to the programmes.
188. The initial suite of programmes has been aligned to the accreditation process of the Engineering Council (AHEP4) with the aim of gaining PSRB accreditation through IET once the programmes have become established. The external academic reviewers have further confirmed the comparability of the programmes with those in equivalent providers. The adoption of these external points of reference, along with the QAA subject benchmark statement and alignment with the FHEQ should ensure that the programmes are benchmarked against the relevant academic and industrial standards.
189. While these processes have yet to be implemented, the assessment team concluded that the proposals in place would enable quality assurance and maintenance of academic standards comparable to other UK higher education providers and that there will be appropriate use of external reference points.

## Conclusions

190. The assessment team concluded that the college's proposed higher education qualifications will be offered at levels that correspond to the relevant levels of the FHEQ, and that the college has clear mechanisms for setting and maintaining academic standards through course approval, annual monitoring, periodic review, and qualification award procedures.
191. The assessment team also concluded that the college's course design and approval procedures are credible and enable the college to design programmes that meet the threshold academic standards described in the FHEQ.
192. Through scrutiny of course design and approval documentation, including external reviewer reports, the assessment team formed the view that the college makes use of appropriate external and independent expertise to establish threshold academic standards.
193. The assessment team further concluded that the college has drafted policies and procedures to enable it to ensure that the threshold standards are maintained and reliable over time, referenced against the sector benchmarks, including the FHEQ, and that it makes appropriate use of external advice and reference points. At the time of the review, however, none of these processes had been implemented so this aspect will require monitoring of the delivery of the programmes and associated assessments, student performance and the ongoing use of benchmarking and externality.
194. The final validation of the programmes will need to be undertaken prior to programme delivery. Likewise, the establishment of the CIAC, with appropriate internal and external membership, will need to be confirmed during the initial period of probation.
195. Based on its findings, the team concluded that the college has a credible New DAPs plan and demonstrated a full understanding of criterion B2 through its processes for making use of external advice and benchmarking against external reference points. These processes can be reasonably expected to enable the college to meet this criterion in full by the end of the probationary period.
196. As the New DAPs plan meets the requirements of this criterion, the assessment team did not identify any specified changes to the plan. However, the team did identify activity which the college should provide an update on in its first quarterly self-assessment submission, and which should be reviewed during the monitoring assessment in year one. This includes:
  - establishment of the Quality Assurance Committee and CIAC
  - confirmation of validation of the four proposed programmes
  - implementation of the 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Policy'
  - establishment and operation of the module and programme assessment boards.

## Criterion B3: Quality of the academic experience

### Advice to the OfS

197. The assessment team's view is that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion B3: Quality of the academic experience.
198. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion B3.
199. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows in summary that the college is able to design and deliver courses and qualifications that provide a high quality academic experience to all students and that the learning opportunities will be rigorously quality assured.
200. This view is based on specific consideration of the supporting evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

### Subcriterion B3.1

**B3.1: Organisations with degree awarding powers are expected to demonstrate that they are able to design and deliver courses and qualifications that provide a high quality academic experience to all students from all backgrounds, irrespective of their location, mode of study, academic subject, protected characteristics, previous educational background or nationality.**

**Learning opportunities are consistently and rigorously quality assured.**

### Advice to the OfS

201. The assessment team's view is that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion B3.1 because it identifies how, by the end of the probationary period, the college will be able to demonstrate that it is able to design and deliver courses and qualifications that provide a high quality academic experience to all students. It also sets out how it plans to ensure that learning opportunities are rigorously quality assured.
202. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion B3.1 because it is able to design and has plans to enable it to deliver courses and qualifications that will provide a high quality academic experience to all students and that it has articulated processes whereby the learning opportunities will be rigorously quality assured.
203. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence, which shows that the college can be reasonably expected to meet the evidence requirements for B3.1 in full by the end of the probationary period.

## Reasoning

### Design and approval of programmes

204. To determine whether the college is able to design and will be able to deliver programmes that provide a high quality academic experience to all students, the assessment team reviewed the following documentation:

- 'Academic Regulations Manual'
- 'Quality Assurance System: Policies, Procedures and Key Documents'
- 'Course Development Policy and Procedures'; the
- 'Learning Resources and Facilities for Student Support' document
- commentary submitted by the college in response to queries raised by the team
- programme and associated module specifications across the four proposed programmes
- 'New Course Proposal' mapping documents
- CVs of the membership of the Academic Board and of the interim academic staff.

205. The assessment team found that the proposed programmes have been developed in accordance with the 'Course Development Policy and Procedures' and 'New Course Development Process Flow Diagram': they have been reviewed by an external assessor and approved by the Academic Board and Governance Board, which also have external membership. However, the assessment team was informed in a meeting with senior staff that the college's Quality Assurance Committee and CIAC had yet to be established in the form in which they operate at EIT. The college confirmed that it plans to establish these committees once New DAPs had been granted (see also [paragraphs 147-150; 157](#)).

206. The assessment team met with and reviewed the CVs of EIT academic staff who were involved in the development of the proposed programmes. The team was informed in its meeting with academic staff that the programme design is based on EIT's extensive experience of developing and delivering similar online degree programmes and that the ongoing delivery of the programmes would be supported by the technical and academic teams from the sister company. Academic staff also confirmed that they had received detailed induction in the relevant development policies and 'Learning and Teaching Strategy 2024-2029'. However, as the college plans to replace the course leaders and academic staff drawn from EIT during the first six months of delivery, the effective recruitment and induction of appropriate academic staff will need to be monitored during the initial probationary period. In support of new staff, the team was informed that the college will continue to receive academic support from the sister company during the initial period of probation and that incoming staff will receive equivalent inductions. Furthermore, the 'Staff Development Policy' outlines institutional support for academic staff to engage in developmental activities relating to pedagogic development and a commitment to supporting them in gaining higher qualifications and recognition through fellowship with Advance HE.

207. The team also confirmed that the development and approval of the proposed programmes has been subject to review by external experts. These external experts have confirmed that the programme specifications are comparable with those delivered by other higher education providers and align with the FHEQ and the expectations of the Engineering Council's accreditation criteria. The Academic Board, which provides final approval, also has external academic membership. Review of the programme and module specifications and the alignment documentation enabled the team to make direct confirmation of the appropriate correlation with the FHEQ. The terms of reference of the Academic Board and CIAC include the requirement to oversee the development of any future new programmes and give final approval before making the recommendation to the Governance Board. Academic Board will also receive and approve the monitoring and review reports for the currently proposed programmes. The team was therefore able to confirm that the design and developmental processes ensure that the academic standards and content of the programmes meet the external expectations.
208. The college reports in its New DAPs plan that students within a cohort will follow the same calendar for programme delivery and adhere to the same assessment and examination dates. Based on its review of the programme specifications, the assessment team understood that the programmes will be delivered separately, and do not include multiple elements or alternative pathways. While the combination of synchronous and asynchronous delivery will enable part-time students to study with some flexibility, the modules will be studied in sequence, thereby maintaining programme coherence.
209. The assessment team reviewed the college's programme planning and approval arrangements and found that the Academic Board had given consideration to learning support services through the approvals process. More specifically, the Board had considered the provision of: technical support; academic advice provided by course advisors and LSOs; eLibrary facilities; remote laboratories ('remote labs'); and the VLE. The team was informed that the college's planned provision of learning support is based on EIT's experience of delivering equivalent programmes in Australia. The associated structures and policies are set out in the 'Learning Resources and Facilities for Student Support' document. This also sets out that the Academic Resources Department will regularly review the provision of learning resources in line with student demand and feedback. It will also reference these against the expectations of industry and the PSRB. For future courses, resource needs will be overseen by the CIAC, which includes academic and industrial representation.
210. The team also accessed the college's online resources, including its VLE and remote labs. It confirmed these were appropriate and that the college had considered the provision of learning resources as part of the process of programme approval and mapping against the programme specifications.

## **Learning and teaching**

211. To determine whether the college is able to deliver courses that provide a high quality learning experience, the assessment team reviewed the following documentation:
- 'ECT Strategic Plan UK 2024-2029'
  - 'Learning and Teaching Strategy 2024' and 'Learning and Teaching Policy'

- 'Online Student Handbook'
- 'Learning Resources and Facilities for Student Support'
- 'Students at Risk Policy' and procedures
- CVs of academic staff
- 'Student Council Terms of Reference'
- 'End of Study Period Survey'
- 'Comprehensive Course Structure' documentation for each of the proposed programmes.

212. The college's strategic approach to learning and teaching is articulated through the 'ECT Strategic Plan UK 2024-2029', the Learning and Teaching Policy and the 'Learning and Teaching Strategy'. This Strategy sets out four goals detailing the college's strategic approach to learning and teaching delivery and the support for student learning, in particular the provision of 'student-centred learning and teaching excellence' and a 'supportive and inclusive learning environment'. The assessment team identified that the college has established a set of KPIs in the Strategic Plan, and these will be monitored to enable effective governance oversight of the quality of the student learning experience, through annual reports to the Academic Board.

213. The college plans to monitor the quality of the student learning experience through quantitative data on engagement and performance which will be reported to the Academic Board via the Board of Studies. Student feedback on the learning experience is proposed to include feedback through end of module surveys and student membership of the Student Council. The President of the Student Council will also be a member of the Board of Studies, the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Academic Board, thereby providing routes into the college's governance structures. At the time of the visit, the Council was yet to be established but the documentary evidence reviewed by the team indicated that the proposed systems should provide effective routes for the student voice.

214. The CVs of the academic staff in post at the time of the visit, and those of the members of the Academic Board, indicate that the college team has a wide range of academic and industrial experience to assure the academic quality of the programmes.

215. The assessment team accessed the college's VLE, Moodle, and online resources. It was also provided with a tour and online demonstration of the resources that will be in place. The team found that the approach to online teaching was well developed, with the provision of materials and resources being built on the experience of delivering the equivalent courses in Australia, and that the college would have ongoing academic and technical support from EIT.

216. The college has set out a series of regulations and codes of practice regarding academic freedom and ethics. These include a 'Student Code of Conduct', which sets out the expectations of behaviours to staff and fellow students, respecting the rights, differences and welfare of all members of the college. There is an expectation that students will attend their classes, participate actively and also behave respectfully within the virtual environments.

217. The assessment team also reviewed the detailed course structures for the proposed programmes and concluded that the documentation for the programmes and modules provided clear mapping of the learning outcomes and, for each module specification of the module content, forms of assessment and their relative weighting.
218. The college's proposed programmes are targeted at mature students who are working in the engineering industry and studying part-time. The teaching delivery is therefore very flexible, based on synchronous and asynchronous online delivery. Teaching sessions will be recorded to enable students to engage with the material if they have been unable to attend a session, and/or for revision purposes. Through access to the VLE, the assessment team was able to confirm that the materials are accessible in a time-independent system. Furthermore, the remote labs are available 24/7, which will enable students to access the resources around their employment schedules.
219. The assessment team was able to confirm that student independent learning will also be supported by the provision of an extensive eLibrary which contains academic resources in addition to study support materials and guidance for the remote labs. Students will be able to access technical support via the EIT Remote Lab Support Team which provides a 24-hour turnaround.
220. On enrolment, students will be required to engage with the orientation programmes, which provide information regarding the college's approaches to learning and teaching, the resources available and the support provision. The induction programme will also include specific reference to the importance of academic honesty and ethical behaviours, with the codes set out in the 'Academic Regulations Manual' and 'Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedures' as the points of reference. Induction sessions will also be recorded and made available on the VLE for future reference (see also [paragraph 288](#)).
221. Student support will be available from the course team and also the LSOs who are attached to each module. Student attendance, submission of assessments and progress will be monitored by the LSOs and module co-ordinators. This information will be reported to the Board of Studies on a monthly basis to enable identification of, and provision of support to, students who fail to attend sessions or submit assignments. Again, the team learnt that the support structures are based on those already effectively in operation at EIT.
222. Along with the remote labs, available online, students will be required to undertake practical, hands-on elements. For many students this will be enabled via their current employer and recorded in their logbooks. For those students who are not in employment or who do not have access to the necessary facilities, the college plans to establish, at its Stevenage site, a laboratory facility where students can undertake the required exercises as zero credit modules. At the time of the visit, these laboratory facilities had not yet been constructed. The team was informed that the college will have these in place in time for the delivery of the required modules. Their timely establishment will need to be confirmed as part of the ongoing monitoring. The team was further informed in the meeting with senior staff that, in the interim, the college was also in negotiation with the IET with a view to enable opportunities for students to attend physical laboratory spaces at the institute's premises in Stevenage, if required. The institute's offices are in close and convenient proximity to the college's site (see also [paragraph 295](#)).

223. Based on the review of the documentation, the experience of the staff, the online resources in place and the ongoing operation of EIT in delivering an equivalent model, the team concluded that the college has in place appropriate plans and structures to enable it to deliver a high-quality learning experience for all students and that there will be mechanisms in place for monitoring student progress. Student feedback on the learning experience through the surveys and the Student Council will also be utilised to inform the college's approaches to learning and teaching.

## **Assessment**

224. To assess the college's approach to assessment, the assessment team reviewed the following documentation:

- 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Policy' and procedures
- 'Mitigating Circumstances Policy' and procedures
- 'Credit and Recognition of Prior Learning Policy'
- 'Online Learning Handbook for ECT Students'
- 'Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedures'
- programme and module specifications for the four proposed programmes.

225. The assessment, moderation and student progress policy and procedures documentation sets out the responsibilities of the individual members of staff and of respective boards and committees in relation to assessment design, marking and moderation and the different forms of assessment to be utilised. The assessment team found that the different module specifications include a wide range of assessment formats, including formative, summative, theoretical and practical exercises, thereby assessing a range of skills as well as knowledge and understanding.

226. Assessments are required to be defined through assessment briefs. At the start of each academic year, all module descriptors and assessment briefs will be made available to the students. There is also a requirement that all assessments have clear marking criteria, which are set out in specific marking rubrics. The module documentation and programme specifications set out the learning outcomes for the modules and programme as a whole and indicate how these are mapped against the assessments, thereby enabling the students to track their progress. Students will also receive guidance on the mapping process during the compulsory induction and at the start of each module.

227. In addition to the numeric grades, students will also receive feedback on their assignments through a range of media, including via Moodle, video comments and written feedback. The assessment procedures set out timeframes within which assessment results and feedback must be provided to students. In the case of formative assessments, feedback for online submissions via the VLE should be provided immediately; for other forms of submission, the feedback should be provided within ten working days. In the case of summative assessments, feedback should be provided within 21 working days. In all cases, the feedback should be aligned with the learning outcomes and the marking criteria to enable the students to review

their progress against those outcomes. At the time of the assessment, because no teaching had been delivered, the team was not able confirm the quality of feedback provision and this will need to be monitored during the probationary period.

228. The mitigating circumstances policy and procedure set out the processes for consideration of mitigating circumstances and the application for extensions and/or additional considerations with regards to students submitting work or participating in assessment activities. The policy identifies the range of grounds for mitigation, such as serious illness, which the team observed are comparable with those of other higher education providers. The policy also identifies support which students will be able to access, through the dedicated programme LSOs in the first instance.
229. The team found that the college has defined its processes for the recognition of credit and prior certificated learning, including the assessment of applications by the course leader. It further found that the transfer of credit will be permitted in recognition of formal study undertaken at recognised tertiary institutions, which will be determined by a mapping exercise against the academic level and learning outcomes achieved. Recognition of prior experiential learning will only be permitted where an applicant can provide appropriate evidence to demonstrate that they have acquired the relevant skills and knowledge.
230. At the time of the assessment the college did not yet have any students, so it was not possible to determine the extent to which staff and students engage in dialogue to promote a shared understanding of the academic judgements. However, the assessment team considered that the guidance that will be provided to students regarding the policies and procedures for assessment through their induction, module information and feedback provision should enable students to understand the basis of the academic judgements. This will need to be confirmed during the probationary period.
231. All students will be required to attend the week-long induction programme which, in addition to providing an overall introduction to the programme (see also [paragraph 220](#) and [paragraph 288](#)), will include an overview of the assessment framework and the expectations of good academic practice. These are also set out in the 'Academic Regulations Manual' and the 'Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedures' which will be introduced to the students during the induction programme. The induction programme will also include a study skills programme and guidance for using the eLibrary which, the team identified, also contains guidance on academic skills. Students will receive further guidance on academic skills development through feedback on individual assessments.
232. Since the majority of the assessments will be undertaken online, the college plans to implement procedures to ensure the integrity of the assessments. The assessment team was informed that these will include presentation of proof of identification, the use of remote electronic IRIS invigilation proctoring software, along with the remote observation of specific exercises and submission of assessments through Turnitin to check for plagiarism. The 'Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedures' set out the college's definitions of the different forms of breach of academic integrity and the associated penalties, along with its Student Code of Conduct.
233. The levels of misconduct are divided into three categories based on severity, including a minor infringement which is unintentional, for example due to poor referencing. When

misconduct is identified it will be reported to the relevant LSO to determine the level and, in collaboration with the lecturer, the LSO will prepare an initial report detailing the findings and inviting the student to respond. If misconduct is subsequently confirmed, the LSO with the Higher Education Manager will agree the penalty to be applied. The student may lodge an appeal in accordance with the 'Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy and Procedures'. The assessment team observed that the processes proposed for considering cases of academic misconduct and the associated penalties are in line with those operated in other higher education providers, based on the team's experience, and appear appropriate for the proposed provision.

234. The assessment team reviewed the documentation on the IRIS invigilation website<sup>13</sup> and noted that the system was in operation in a number of higher education providers. At the time of the visit, the assessment team was informed that, while the IRIS software was operational at EIT and staff were experienced in its use, it was not yet in place for the college and there would need to be considerations of compliance with the UK's GDPR requirements prior to its introduction. The assessment team concluded that, given the importance of ensuring integrity in assessments, confirmation of compliance with the GDPR requirements and installation of the software would be needed prior to the college commencing delivery of its programmes.
235. The college has established a set of regulations that will govern the processes for assessment and progression as defined in the 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Procedures' and the 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Procedures'. The responsibilities of individual members of staff and of respective boards and committees in terms of marking and moderation are defined, with the Academic Board having overall responsibility for all aspects of assessment, progression and moderation. The team found that all summative assessments will be subject to independent internal moderation through a standardised sampling process whereby ten per cent of assessments (or a minimum of six, based on class size) will be moderated. In discharging its responsibilities, the Academic Board will delegate authority to the Module Assessment Boards, Programme Assessment Boards and the Quality Assurance Committee. The team considered that the proposed levels of sampling and the processes for moderation are in line with those operated by other higher education providers and appear appropriate for the forms of assessment to be utilised.

### **External examining**

236. To assess the college's approach to external examining, the assessment team reviewed the following documentation:
- 'External Examining Policy and Procedures'
  - 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Policy' and procedures
  - 'Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy
  - 'External Review Reports' for the proposed programmes.
237. External examiners will be appointed by the Academic Board in accordance with a set of criteria that are aligned with the UK Quality Code. These include being able to demonstrate

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<sup>13</sup> See IRIS, [Home - Iris Invigilation](#).

relevant academic experience and lack of any excluding connection with the college. External examiner nominations will be reviewed initially by the Quality and Compliance Manager to confirm the appointment criteria are met. The Academic Board will make a decision on the appointment, with sign-off by the Governance Board. The assessment team considered that the appointment criteria are in alignment with wider sector expectations, are appropriate for the college, and that the governance of the process should ensure that appropriate individuals are appointed. The team was also assured by its scrutiny which confirmed that the external reviewers appointed to undertake the initial programme reviews were appropriately qualified.

238. From its review of the documentation provided by the college, the team determined that newly appointed external examiners will be provided with the relevant programme documentation, details of their responsibilities, and will be required to attend a programme of induction.
239. The assessment team found that external examiners will be required to comment on assignment briefs and, where these contribute significantly to the final award classification, they will also receive a sample of student assessed work for moderation. This sample will comprise the larger sample of either a minimum of ten per cent of the submissions or a minimum of six items. The examiners will be required to confirm that the assessments and the standards achieved are in line with sector benchmarks, including the FHEQ, and are comparable with the standards of other higher education providers. The assessment team was able to confirm that these processes appear robust, and appropriate for the college's proposed DAPs arrangements.
240. The 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Policy' confirms that external examiners will be full members of the Programme Assessment Boards and required to confirm the results of these boards. They will also report annually to the Board of Studies, which will ratify the results before they are presented to the Governance Board for final approval. The annual reports will include feedback on the academic programme reviewed, confirmation of the quality and standards of the student assessments, and any recommendations for improvement. Following consideration of the reports by the Academic Board and the Board of Studies, the Dean will be required to sign off on the response and list of actions to be taken and copy this to the external examiner. These processes should enable the college to give full consideration to the feedback provided by the external examiners and respond to them appropriately.
241. While at the time of the assessment no student assessments had been undertaken and no external examiners appointed, the assessment team could confirm that the processes in place should assure the standards of the awards. It also confirmed that the governance routes are appropriate and comparable with those of other higher education providers. With this in mind, it is likely that the college will be able to ensure it is giving full and serious consideration to the comments and recommendations contained in external examiners' reports, and also provide examiners with a considered and timely response to their comments and recommendations. The team also observed that the college had engaged external reviewers in the process of programme approval for the proposed programmes. The reporting requirements for these external members were similar to those planned for external examiners with regard to confirmation of the quality and standards of the proposed programmes and alignment with the FHEQ. The team was therefore assured that the college understands the requirements of external examinerships.

## Academic appeals and student complaints

242. To assess the college's approach to addressing academic appeals and student complaints, the assessment team reviewed the 'Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy', and corresponding procedures document.
243. The 'Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy' and the procedures set out definitions of the scope of complaints, grievances and appeals and the principles for their handling. Although titled 'Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals', the procedures document combines complaints and grievances lodged by both students and staff. The assessment team considered that this was unusual and leads to a lack of clarity regarding the operation of the procedures, since they will involve different routes and terminologies. As a result, this could lead to confusion for students and the team recommends the college disaggregates the procedures.
244. Furthermore, the 'Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals Policy' states that 'any appeals will be referred to an external reviewer...'; however, this process is not referred to in the procedures document and therefore requires clarification.
245. For both complaints and appeals, there are two proposed streams of resolution: informal and formal. The team was informed that support for students wishing to submit an appeal or complaint will be provided by the LSOs as the first point of contact, or the Higher Education Manager. In the first instance, these individuals can advise students on engaging with the informal route as an initial step to expedite resolution where suitable.
246. In the case of the formal route, the college sets out the processes for consideration of the complaint or appeal and the associated timelines for the different stages. Following submission of a formal student complaint or appeal, in line with the timelines set out in the procedures, the Higher Education Manager will review and respond to the submission. The student is then required to respond to confirm if they wish to proceed with the complaint or appeal. If so, a facilitator is appointed and an individual or group meeting of the parties will be scheduled. If the issue is resolved at this stage, the outcomes will be agreed and signed by both parties. However, if the issue is not resolved, an internal review and investigation will be initiated, chaired by the Chair of the Academic Board or the Board of Governance. Should the internal complaints processes be exhausted, the student will be advised of their right to forward the case to the OIA.
247. The college had yet to admit students onto its higher education programmes at the time of the assessment, and therefore the team was unable to confirm that students understand the processes and are fully informed regarding the support available. It was also not yet able to confirm that the policies are implemented fully, consistently and in a timely manner. Whilst the processes outlined in the policy and procedures are appropriate and in line with those operated by other higher education providers, the college should take action to disaggregate the staff and student elements of the complaints and appeals policies to ensure clarity for all groups.

## Conclusions

248. The assessment team concluded that the college has established policies and procedures to enable it to meet the requirements of this criterion in so far that there is evidence of the

college having designed programmes which are underpinned by appropriate policies and procedures to enable provision of a high quality academic experience to all students.

249. Based on its findings, the team concluded that the college has a credible New DAPs plan and demonstrated a full understanding of criterion B3 which can be reasonably expected to enable the college to meet this criterion in full by the end of the probationary period.

250. As the New DAPs plan meets the requirements of this criterion, the assessment team did not identify any specified changes to the plan. However, as no programmes have yet been delivered, the team identified specific activity which the college should provide an update on in its first quarterly self-assessment submission and which should be reviewed during the monitoring assessment in year one. This includes:

- Prior to programme delivery, confirmation of addressing the GDPR requirements for the use of remote proctoring software (IRIS) and effective installation of the system
- Creation of separate documentation for handling student complaints and appeals and those for handling staff grievances
- Timely establishment of the required laboratory facilities.

# Assessment of DAPs criterion C: Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff

## Criterion C1: The role of academic and professional staff

### Advice to the OfS

251. The assessment team's view is that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion C1: The role of academic and professional staff.
252. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion C1.
253. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows in summary that the college, if it develops its staffing base as set out in the New DAPs plan, will have an appropriate number of academic staff to teach students, and that staff will be appropriately qualified to teach and support the students at the levels of the qualifications to be awarded. The college commits to ensuring that staff will maintain a professional understanding of emergent themes in research and scholarship within their discipline, and that they will remain up to date with pedagogical developments relating to their professional practice. The college has also demonstrated that the assessment of students can be reasonably expected to be carried out in a professional, rigorous and consistent way.
254. This view is based on specific consideration of the supporting evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

### Subcriterion C1.1

**C1.1: An organisation granted powers to award degrees assures itself that it has appropriate numbers of staff to teach its students. Everyone involved in teaching or supporting student learning, and in the assessment of student work, is appropriately qualified, supported and developed to the level(s) and subject(s) of the qualifications being awarded.**

### Advice to the OfS

255. The assessment team's view is that the New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion C1.1 because its plans are expected to ensure that it will have appropriate numbers of staff to teach its students, and that staff expected to be involved in teaching or supporting learning will be appropriately qualified, supported and developed to the levels and subjects of the qualifications to be awarded.
256. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion C1.1 because it will be able to assure itself that it has appropriate numbers of staff to teach its students, and that all those involved in teaching, supporting or assessing students are appropriately qualified, supported and developed to do so.

257. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence, which shows that the college can be reasonably expected to meet the requirements for C1.1 in full by the end of the probationary period.

## Reasoning

258. From its review of the college's policies in the 'Learning and Teaching Strategy', the assessment team identified that academic staff will be supported to engage in continuing professional development and related activities with the intention of strengthening both pedagogic and disciplinary expertise. The 'Learning and Teaching Policy' also sets out relevant core principles underpinning the delivery of provision, such as continuous improvement of learning and teaching. This is further supported by the 'Staff Development Policy' which outlines support for academic staff to engage in scholarship activities relating to pedagogic development, including both professional recognition through Advance HE and academic qualifications focusing on teaching and learning. The team's view is that these mechanisms provide a desk-based framework which offers confidence in the college's ability to demonstrate relevant learning, teaching and assessment practices during the probationary period should New DAPs be awarded.

259. To inform the team's view on the academic and (where applicable) professional expertise of staff involved in teaching, learning and assessment, the team reviewed the CVs of 15 academic staff and 11 senior staff, including 13 lecturers and two course leaders. The team formed the view that academic staff hold appropriate qualifications to support the delivery of provision at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The team further found that all academic staff hold doctorate-level qualifications, and that the CVs also provide broad evidence of academic staff having gained professional qualifications, including membership of relevant PSRBs, primarily the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

260. Against this background, the team's view is that staff who will be involved in teaching or supporting student learning, and in the assessment of student work, have the relevant academic and professional expertise necessary to deliver the four proposed programmes of study at Levels 4-6 and Level 7.

261. The team identified that, although there was clear indication from the CVs that the overwhelming majority of staff have direct and recent experience of delivering taught programmes, evidence of pedagogic development of discipline knowledge, such as professional recognition awarded through Advance HE currently appears less frequently. However, the college's 'Staff Development Policy' clearly states a commitment to support staff in achieving pedagogic qualifications. Additionally, in a meeting with the assessment team, the college's senior staff stated that it is in conversation with Advance HE regarding the development of an Advance HE-accredited, internal continuing professional development (CPD) programme, designed to enable staff to make a claim for Fellowship.

262. The team's view is that both the college's stated commitment to providing funding to support staff in undertaking higher qualifications, and the confirmation of this position received in the meeting with senior staff, underline how the college plans to develop its staff during the probationary period. This commitment to supporting staff in undertaking pedagogy-focused qualifications and training, and to working with Advance HE on the development of a CPD scheme to facilitate staff in gaining professional recognition, bodes well for the emergence of

a culture of active engagement with the pedagogic development of discipline knowledge. However, it will remain important to monitor this element of criterion C1 during the probationary period in the event that New DAPs is awarded.

263. A key goal in the college's Strategic Plan aims to encourage excellence in scholarship and research. It was evident from the team's examination of CVs that the interim academic staff from EIT have established publication records underpinned by a relevant research agenda. Further, senior staff provided additional reassurance that teaching on the four programmes would be research-informed, and highlighted examples of EIT staff whose research has already informed the syllabus content in curriculum design at the sister company.
264. The team identified that mechanisms will be in place to ensure that academic staff have opportunities to engage in reflection and evaluation of their learning, teaching and assessment practice. This is evidenced through, for example:
- the 'Staff Recruitment Management and Development Policy', which sets out the college's encouragement and support for staff to reflect on their practice
  - the 'Staff Performance Review Policy', which references a framework through which staff can systematically reflect upon their professional and career development
  - the 'Staff Development Policy', which links peer review of teaching practices to opportunities to engage in scholarly activity.
265. The team formed the view that the provision of funding to support engagement in CPD activities outlined in the 'Staff Development Policy' demonstrated the college's commitment to the professional development of its academic staff. This was further emphasised in the team's meeting with senior staff, who confirmed that funding would be available to support staff in gaining higher qualifications relating to pedagogy. Furthermore, the 'Learning and Teaching Strategy' highlights that CPD activities will include: the completion of accredited programmes; attending conferences, webinars, workshops and online professional development courses; engaging in rotations, shadowing, and localised training.
266. The team's view is that the evidence outlined above provides confidence in the college's plans and ability to deliver appropriate development opportunities around the enhancement of practice and scholarship.
267. The 'Staff Development Policy' sets out that academic staff will be encouraged and supported to participate in the activities of other higher education providers, including involvement as external examiners and external reviewers. The assessment team's review of staff CVs revealed that some academic staff have experience of acting as external examiners and/or working with external professional bodies to support the development of those organisations' activities. Further, the meeting with senior staff confirmed that the professional networks of senior members of the team could be leveraged in order to yield suitable opportunities for academic staff to engage with other UK higher education providers.
268. While direct evidence of such engagement is absent at this time due to the nature of the college's current status regarding New DAPs, it is reasonable to expect that some of the more experienced academic staff who are expected to teach on the college's proposed

programmes should be appropriately placed to evidence their engagement with such activities during the probationary period should New DAPs be awarded.

269. From its examination of CVs and the 'ECT Staff Spreadsheet', the team established that academic staff have direct experience of teaching in relevant subject areas within the discipline at recognised higher education providers across a range of international locations. The team formed the view that appropriate capacity and expertise exists within the proposed teaching delivery team to enable successful engagement in assessment, marking and moderation. Further, the 'Staff Development Policy' outlines the college's expectations on academic staff to engage with relevant training and development opportunities, with monitoring of this engagement supported through the staff performance review processes.
270. The team's examination of the college's 'Learning and Teaching Strategy' identified that academic staff will be expected to undertake training during induction and engage in ongoing development with areas of pedagogic practice including instructional design, effective assessment practices, interactive teaching and academic integrity. The team further identified from the 'Staff Development Policy' that development sessions will be available for all staff, covering topics including effective assessment practices, marking rubrics, feedback and tutor-student communication, and that mechanisms for monitoring engagement with training and development opportunities are built into the 'Staff Performance Review Policy and Procedures'. It is anticipated that the probationary period will provide evidence of staff engagement and how this is monitored by the college as part of staff performance reviews, and, where applicable, in cases made for academic promotion.
271. Furthermore, the meeting with senior staff highlighted that senior members of staff could be expected to engage in mentoring junior colleagues to assist in the development of their professional practice. The team's review of the CVs of academic staff identified appropriate and relevant expertise in curriculum development and assessment design which could be shared for the benefit of colleagues with less direct experience. The 'Academic Staff Promotions Policy and Criteria' also outlines how junior academic staff (referred to as 'Level A' academics) might work with more senior colleagues to develop aspects of their professional practice such as curriculum development and assessment design.
272. The team's view was that this combination of evidence, from sources including both policy and personal experience, bodes well for the emergence of a supportive and collaborative culture around curriculum development and assessment design.
273. The college provided the CVs of 14 academic staff and two course leaders expected to teach on the four proposed programmes of study at Levels 4-6 and Level 7. With a stated commitment to maintaining a staff-student ratio below 1:20, it is anticipated that the number of staff available to teach students would be appropriate. It will be important to monitor this requirement during the probationary period.
274. Another key goal in the college's Strategic Plan aims to encourage excellence in management, staff and staffing processes, and the 'Staff Recruitment Management and Development Policy' outlines the college's procedures for acquiring and appointing new staff through processes which appear to be appropriate for and consistent with other UK higher education providers. These include an insistence that all academic staff hold discipline-appropriate academic qualifications, and that academic staff hold a qualification at least one

level above that which they are teaching, with professional membership of a relevant industry body forming a key desirable criterion. Given both the oversight of recruitment by the Academic Board and the key role of the Dean in confirming appointments, the team is confident that the college will be well positioned to ensure that staff recruitment processes are adhered to, and that the quality of appointments will be consistent with the requirements laid out in this policy.

## Conclusions

275. The assessment team formed the view that the college's plans will enable it to have appropriate numbers of staff to teach its students. It also concluded that staff who will be involved in teaching or supporting student learning, and in the assessment of student work, can be reasonably expected to be appropriately qualified, supported and developed to the levels and subjects of the proposed programmes. Evidence to support this conclusion can be seen in, for example, the frequency of doctoral-level qualifications and memberships of professional bodies among the interim academic staff base drawn from the college's sister company, and the college's focus on support and development as outlined in relevant strategy and policy documents.
276. Based on its findings, the team concluded that the college has a credible New DAPs plan and demonstrated a full understanding of criterion C1 which can be reasonably expected to enable the college to meet this criterion in full by the end of the probationary period.
277. As the New DAPs plan meets the requirements of this criterion, the assessment team did not identify any specified changes to the plan. However, the team did identify activity which the college should provide an update on in its first quarterly self-assessment submission, and which should be reviewed during the monitoring assessment in year one. This includes implementation of the Staff Development Policy, with a specific focus on:
- the development of the relationship with Advance HE, and progress of academic and support staff towards achieving the different classifications of Fellowship
  - the engagement of academic and support staff with opportunities to gain higher qualifications relating to pedagogy
  - the development and uptake of opportunities for academic staff to participate in external examination, programme reviews, and benchmarking activities of other higher education providers.

# Assessment of DAPs criterion D: Environment for supporting students

## Criterion D1: Enabling student development and achievement

### Advice to the OfS

278. The assessment team's view is that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion D1: Enabling student development and achievement.
279. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion D1.
280. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows in summary that the college has in place policies and procedures which can reasonably be expected to enable students in developing and achieving academically, professionally and personally.
281. This view is based on specific consideration of the supporting evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

### Subcriterion D1.1

**D1.1: Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.**

### Advice to the OfS

282. The assessment team's view is that the New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion D1.1 because the college has developed policies and procedures which can reasonably be expected to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.
283. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion D1.1 because it has in place arrangements and resources which should enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential, supported by appropriate mechanisms through which to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these arrangements and the provision of these resources.
284. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence, which shows that the college can be reasonably expected to meet the evidence requirements for D1.1 in full by the end of the probationary period.

### Reasoning

285. To determine whether the college will have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential, the team considered evidence from a range of sources including:

- the 'Admissions and Enrolment Policy and Procedures'
- the 'Student Support Policy' and 'Student Support Procedures'
- the 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Policy'
- the 'Students at Risk Policy' and the 'Students at Risk Procedures'
- the 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy'
- meetings held with senior staff, academic staff and support staff
- the demonstration of online resources including virtual labs and programming environments.

286. In considering whether the college will take a comprehensive strategic and operational approach to determine and evaluate how it enables student development and achievement, the team focused on the college's 'Learning and Teaching Strategy' and its Strategic Plan. The team observed the college's commitment to enabling student development and achievement through the adoption of four core learning and teaching goals. These combine an industry-led curriculum with student-centred learning within a supportive and inclusive learning environment, and a culture of academic and research integrity. It further observed that the college identifies support for the realisation of these goals in the Strategic Plan, where one of the goal's sets out the college's aim of fostering interconnectedness between students, lecturers and support staff. It plans to do this by building students' relationships with LSOs who will be dedicated to the management of each cohort.

287. The 'Admissions and Enrolment Policy' outlines how prospective students will be supported through the college's application, enrolment and induction processes. The assessment team found that the college's course advisors will provide prospective students with advice and information intended to enable them to make informed decisions according to their learning goals, career aspirations and previous education. This will include, where applicable, information on bridging courses and open-source courses for improving proficiency in mathematics and English. In addition to guiding applicants through the online application process, the policy states that course advisors will provide applicants with information on course fees and financial support, including bursaries for underrepresented groups. On enrolment, LSOs will contact students who have identified any individual needs in their application such as a learning difference or disability, to discuss and arrange tailored support. The team recognises this policy statement as embodying a positive commitment to the provision of tailored and effective advice, which takes account of applicants, and which is formulated to be differentiated and responsive according to individuals' needs, prior educational backgrounds and professional experience.

288. Elsewhere in the 'Admissions and Enrolment Policy', the college outlines a requirement for students to participate in a compulsory one-week induction prior to the start of their programme. The team recognises the benefits to students of this pre-registration requirement both as a mechanism to ensure effective induction, and also to facilitate early identification of the specific needs of individuals joining the college from diverse educational and professional backgrounds. Furthermore, the team received reassurance from the Student Success Manager during the meeting with support staff that online orientation sessions will be used to

ensure that students are aware of expectations around what practical elements they will be expected to complete, in particular for students who are not currently employed in the engineering industry and/or don't have access to the required level of experience in their employment.

289. The assessment team observed that the Student Support Policy highlights conditions under which signposting to support and counselling services may be initiated, while finding that the Student Support Procedures offer further details of both the general and individualised support available, and the procedures for its provision. The 'Students at Risk Procedures' outlines the college's processes for monitoring of student progression and performance, including the use of performance data to support decisions around resource needs such as additional teaching resources. Further planned reporting mechanisms, such as the 'End of Study Period Survey' and continuous monitoring framework mentioned in paragraphs 326-329 below, gave the team confidence that the college will monitor both the extent of uptake and the effectiveness of this provision through a forum which is empowered to adjust and augment aspects of this service as required.
290. The assessment team found that the 'Assessment, Moderation and Student Progress Policy' and the 'Students at Risk Policy' highlight a commitment to monitoring student progression and performance in a consistent and timely manner. This is underpinned by a framework based on identifying those at risk, providing support through intervention and counselling strategies, and sharing information regarding course requirements and expectations. The team also found that monitoring and reporting are explicitly addressed at a policy level, noting that criteria for identifying students at risk are clearly stated. Objectives outlining the college's commitment to the identification of students at risk of unsatisfactory progress are supported by intervention strategies designed to ensure the provision of effective and timely support. These include support to address academic or personal issues, counselling and providing information on course requirements. Furthermore, the tour of the VLE and online resources demonstrated how students' grades will appear in the gradebook feature of the VLE, and will enable lecturers, LSOs, academic staff and students themselves to monitor student progress and performance.
291. The 'Students at Risk Procedures' document provides further details on how the LSOs will monitor students' progress throughout each study period, through monthly reports generated by the Student Management System, VLE and virtual classroom platform. Report data will include information on attendance, assessment progress, grades and written reports on student engagement from lecturers and LSOs. Furthermore, at the end of each study period, LSOs will generate an 'At Risk Report' containing a list of students who have been identified as 'potentially at risk'. The report will be reviewed by the Higher Education Manager, with emphasis placed on paying particular attention to students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with disabilities who may have special needs. It was further evident from the meeting with support staff that the LSOs will play a key role in actively monitoring and supporting students, and the team recognises this as a strong step towards ensuring enhanced retention and progression, and minimised rates of attrition.
292. The team found that KPI 1.5 – and its associated targets as set out in the college's Strategic Plan – aims to ensure that graduates are enabled to apply skills gained from their studies within their workplace settings, and to realise opportunities for enhanced levels of employment. This theme was further developed in the Learning and Teaching Strategy, which

outlines the college's commitment to supporting students in acquiring, beyond the necessary knowledge base within the discipline, appropriate attributes, competencies, attitudes and values through which to equip themselves with the skills and the characteristics required to become more employable professionals within their fields, and to take ownership of their career progression and development.

293. Further, both the meetings held with senior staff, academic staff and support staff, and the demonstration of online resources including virtual labs and programming environments, all showed an organisational commitment to delivering an active and experiential learning experience which will enable students to acquire the skills needed to make effective use of the digital and physical learning resources. Against this backdrop, the team is confident that the pedagogic approach to delivery adopted by the college will provide opportunities for students to develop skills which will contribute directly to their academic, personal and professional progression.
294. The assessment team examined KPI 1.4 of the college's Strategic Plan, which sets out targets for the delivery of active and experiential learning opportunities through the provision of access to remote, virtual labs and labs kits for deployment in physical spaces. The team further noted that opportunities for some on-campus learning will be provided for those students who may be required to undertake assignments in physical labs, but who do not have immediate access to the relevant facilities within a workplace environment. Regarding student and staff training needs which may arise as a result of the emphasis on the use of virtual labs, the team welcomed KPI 1.7 of the Strategic Plan, which sets a target for the provision of training and education in a range of relevant technologies, including internet-based communications and conferencing, remote and virtual labs, and the VLE.
295. The assessment team observed an apparent heavy reliance on students either being employed at a workplace that can support the mandatory practical elements of the proposed programmes or having gained experience which can be evidenced for recognition of prior learning purposes. Further, the team recognised the possibility that some students may fit neither of these criteria. The team therefore sought to consider how students without appropriate prior experience or learning, whose employment circumstances might preclude workplace-based practical work, could be accommodated within the college's proposed programmes. In the meeting with senior staff, the college outlined its commitment to building dedicated workshop facilities at its Stevenage site, and it was subsequently confirmed through an additional evidence request that the specialised equipment required to undertake the hands-on 'Measurement Science' and 'Power and Control' workshops will be available at the site by the end of the first year of programme delivery. Equipment for the 'Industrial Electrical Engineering' workshop will be available by the end of the second year of programme delivery. The college's additional commentary also provided the team with evidence of the college recognising the need to plan for contingency in the event of any delays to this timescale. For example, it outlines measures which would be implemented for any students unable to complete these workshops at the Stevenage site, including identifying alternative tasks to fulfil the module learning outcomes and collaborating with its industry partners to provide students with access to alternative facilities.
296. The team welcomes both the college's commitment to providing laboratory facilities – to support students who might otherwise be unable to complete the practical work required by

the learning outcomes for modules – and its contingency planning around the timely provision of these facilities.

297. This provided the team with reassurance that UK-based students without access to appropriate physical spaces in their workplace would not be disadvantaged when required to undertake practical work that cannot be completed in virtual and simulated environments. The team's view is that the evidence outlined above engenders confidence in the college's ability to provide opportunities for students to develop the skills necessary to make effective use of the learning resources provided, particularly around the use of digital and virtual environments. Notwithstanding this, the team identifies the unavailability of dedicated lab space until at least the end of the first year of operation as constituting a potential risk to students' academic progression through the proposed Electrical Engineering and Industrial Automation programmes. It will, therefore, remain necessary to closely monitor the development of negotiations and the consequent availability of the physical spaces at the college's location throughout the probationary period, with a particular focus on how students might be afforded access to facilities overseas.
298. The team found evidence across a range of sources which illustrated the college's commitment to equity, including in the 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy' which offers a clear statement of the college's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). The strategy sets out three strategic objectives which outline the college's intent to embed EDI across the organisation, integrate EDI in management processes, and focus on attracting, retaining and developing a diverse student and staff community. The team's confidence in the college's commitment to equity was bolstered further both by details of the college's approach to implementation, and clarity around ownership of responsibilities for implementation, as exemplified through the EDI staff development sessions, and plans for an annual report to the Board of Studies.
299. In addition to the college's EDI Strategy, its 'Admissions and Enrolment Policy' includes a principle which addresses the need for fair and consistent application of equitable, merit-based decisions around admissions and enrolment, requiring these to embody transparency and timeliness, while also including clear statements relating to protected characteristics. The 'Scholarship Policy' further aims to 'address the under-representation of women and persons from disadvantaged groups in engineering occupations' through the provision of financial assistance towards tuition fees and mentorship by an academic member of staff. The college's New DAPs plan indicates that it will be required to provide an annual report to monitor equality and diversity with regards to admissions, enrolment and accessibility.
300. In the absence of any students at this time, there are not yet any sources of experiential evidence to support or contradict suggestions derived from the above, however, based on consideration of the college's policies in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the Admissions and Enrolment Policy, it is the team's view that the organisation's approach will be guided by a commitment to equity.

## Conclusions

301. In conclusion, the team formed the view that the college has established that, although not all facilities will be available from the outset of delivery, it has in place arrangements and resources which should enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional

potential, supported by appropriate mechanisms through which to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these arrangements and the provision of these resources.

302. Based on its findings, the team concluded that the college has a credible New DAPs plan and demonstrated a full understanding of criterion D1 which can be reasonably expected to enable the college to meet this criterion in full by the end of the probationary period.

303. As the New DAPs plan meets the requirements of this criterion, the assessment team did not identify any specified changes to the plan. However, the team identified developments which should be monitored during the monitoring assessment in year one and which the college should provide an update on in its quarterly self-assessment submissions until such developments are complete. This includes:

- prior to programme delivery, progress towards procuring equipment and facilities on the Stevenage campus for students who are unable to undertake practical workshops and assessments at their workplace
- details of any cases where students have been exempted from workshop modules through successful applications for recognition of prior learning
- details of cases where academic and support staff have collaborated with students to identify alternative tasks that fulfil the learning objectives, if industry-based completion has not been possible
- prior to programme delivery, details of progress towards access to laboratory space negotiated through collaboration with industry partners
- prior to programme delivery, progress towards the provision of access to specialist physical facilities at alternate locations for both UK-based and international students.

# Assessment of DAPs criterion E: Evaluation of performance

## Criterion E1: Evaluation of performance

### Advice to the OfS

304. The assessment team's view is that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion E1: Evaluation of performance.
305. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion E1.
306. The assessment team's view is based on the review of evidence and responses to questions during the visit, which shows in summary that the college has established comprehensive mechanisms for critical self-assessment, performance monitoring, and the integration of internal and external expertise. These mechanisms are expected to effectively support continuous improvement and facilitate appropriate actions in response to any issues raised, providing a strong foundation for the ongoing evaluation of academic provision once courses commence.
307. This view is based on specific consideration of the supporting evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

**E1: An organisation granted degree awarding powers takes effective action to assess its own performance, respond to identified weaknesses and develop further its strengths.**

### Advice to the OfS

308. The assessment team's view is that the New DAPs plan is credible in relation to criterion E1 because it demonstrates that the college has established mechanisms to effectively assess its own performance, respond to identified weaknesses, and further develop its strengths in alignment with the stated objectives of its higher education provision.
309. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of criterion E1 because it has developed structured processes for self-assessment, performance monitoring, and continuous improvement, which indicate that the college would be well-positioned to take action to address weaknesses and build on its strengths.
310. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the college's New DAPs plan and evidence, which shows that the college can be reasonably expected to meet the evidence requirements for E1 in full by the end of the probationary period.

### Reasoning

311. To determine whether critical self-assessment will be integral to the operation of the college's higher education provision, the assessment team reviewed several key documents, including:

- 'Terms of Reference for the Governance and Academic Boards'
- 'New Course Development Process Flow Diagram'
- external review reports
- 'Job Description for Course Leaders'
- 'External Examining Policy and Procedures'
- 'End of Study Period Survey'
- 'Module Descriptor – Changes and Approvals Process'.

312. Further insights were gathered during meetings held with senior staff, academic staff and support staff.

313. The college's New DAPs plan states that the 'ECT Strategic Plan UK 2024-2029' establishes a structured approach to institutional self-assessment through the achievement and monitoring of nine strategic goals. Each goal is aligned with specific KPIs, with details of the designated individuals responsible for tracking progress in meeting these metrics. According to the plan, the Governance and Academic Boards will receive annual and quarterly reports on KPI progress, enabling these boards to remain actively informed and to guide remedial actions where targets are unmet. This regular reporting process, verified through documentation, is intended to reinforce an ongoing strategic dialogue that underpins the college's commitment to critical self-assessment and continuous improvement.

314. The 'Terms of Reference for the Governance and Academic Boards' outlines the distinct roles and responsibilities of the Governance Board and the Academic Board, which are critical for overseeing the college's academic performance. The Governance Board's responsibility for corporate governance, and the Academic Board's oversight of academic standards, demonstrate a structured framework that will support the continuous monitoring and review of academic quality. This division of responsibilities demonstrates the integration of self-assessment processes within both the strategic and academic functions of the college, contributing to the effective evaluation of its higher education provision. This framework was further clarified during discussions with senior staff, who elaborated on the oversight provided by the Governance and Academic Boards.

315. The college outlines in its New DAPs plan how its Governance Board will adopt the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Higher Education Code of Governance<sup>14</sup> to guide its governance standards. This includes self-assessment mechanisms where the board will benchmark its practices against other providers, conducting annual reviews and identifying areas for improvement. Additionally, the Governance Board will undertake independent evaluations every five years to review its effectiveness, specifically examining governance structures, quality oversight, risk management and academic governance processes as outlined in its Terms of Reference.

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<sup>14</sup> See University Chairs, [Publications - Committee of University Chairs](#).

316. The implementation of the New DAPs plan is planned to be closely monitored by a sub-committee of the Learning and Teaching Committee. This committee will evaluate progress against milestones, strategic goals and KPIs to assess barriers, performance and required adjustments. Its remit includes tracking achievements, liaising with the OfS, gathering and analysing feedback, and coordinating corrective measures to ensure alignment with the college's overarching quality and governance objectives. Monthly progress reports will be provided to the Academic Board, highlighting areas of concern and ensuring adaptive measures support the successful implementation of the DAPs plan. The assessment team deemed this approach both suitable and credible for supporting the college's self-assessment and improvement objectives.
317. The 'New Course Development Process Flow Diagram' outlines a structured approach for the development of new courses, including stages of internal review and external consultation. The assessment team confirmed that external advisers were consulted during the review of the proposed programmes, as evidenced by external review reports and discussion with senior staff, which commented on their alignment with the FHEQ and AHEP4. The assessment team concluded that this process provides a credible framework for course design and evaluation, incorporating feedback from multiple stakeholders to support self-assessment efforts.
318. The assessment team observed that the 'Job Description for Course Leaders' outlines the responsibility of course leaders in leading and coordinating courses, including managing academic standards and reviewing course performance. This document indicates that course leaders will be expected to be responsible for ongoing course evaluations through academic and administrative oversight, contributing to the critical self-assessment processes within the college. This was reinforced during the meeting with academic staff, where staff explained their role in overseeing ongoing course evaluations and ensuring alignment with academic standards.
319. The 'External Examining Policy and Procedures' outlines the role of external examiners in reviewing academic standards, assessment processes, and student outcomes. The assessment team recognised that the engagement of external examiners, who will provide independent feedback on academic quality and areas for improvement, will play a key role in supporting the college's internal self-assessment by introducing external perspectives into its evaluation processes.
320. The assessment team also noted that the 'End of Study Period Survey' is positioned to serve as a key feedback mechanism for collecting data on students' academic experiences, teaching quality and support services. Both senior staff and support staff confirmed the use of this survey as a tool for collecting and responding to student feedback. This structured approach to gathering student input is expected to provide the college with critical insights that will inform areas for improvement and be integrated into its self-assessment processes, thereby contributing to the ongoing enhancement of its higher education provision.
321. Complementing this feedback mechanism, the 'Module Descriptor – Changes and Approvals Process' details the procedures by which modifications to module content will be documented, reviewed and approved. The assessment team noted that this process is integral to the systematic review and refinement of module delivery and assessment, contributing to a structured evaluation of the college's academic provision. The meeting with

academic staff confirmed the practical application of this process in module reviews and how it feeds into the self-assessment cycle.

322. Based on the review of these documents, as well as the discussions held in meetings, the assessment team concluded that the college has established mechanisms to integrate critical self-assessment into its higher education provision, through continuous internal and external review processes.
323. To test whether the college has established clear mechanisms for assigning and discharging action in relation to the scrutiny and monitoring of its academic provision, the assessment team reviewed key documents including:
- 'Terms of Reference for the Governance and Academic Boards'
  - 'Course Development Policy and Procedures' and 'New Course Development Process Flow Diagram'
  - 'Job Description for Course Leaders'
  - 'External Examining Policy and Procedures'
  - 'Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy' and procedures
  - 'Assessment Moderation and Student Progress Procedures'.
324. Further information was obtained through discussions with senior staff, academic staff and support staff. These documents and discussions enabled the assessment team to assess how the college will systematically allocate responsibilities for monitoring academic standards, to ensure that actions are effectively discharged to maintain the quality of provision across all programmes.
325. The 'Terms of Reference for the Governance and Academic Boards' establishes distinct roles for the Governance Board and the Academic Board, supporting the critical oversight of the college's academic performance. The Governance Board will be responsible for corporate governance, while the Academic Board will oversee academic standards across all programmes. This division of responsibilities provides a clear structure for assessing and managing academic quality and student outcomes, contributing to the college's ability to review its own performance effectively. This separation of duties was confirmed during discussions with senior staff, where they elaborated on the clear delineation of responsibilities between the boards.
326. The assessment team identified that the college has a framework for developing new courses and revising existing ones, as documented in the 'Course Development Policy and Procedures'. The framework outlines procedures for internal review, stakeholder consultation and final approval. This systematic approach ensures that new and revised courses will align with academic standards, external benchmarks and industry requirements. Complementing this, the 'New Course Development Process Flow Diagram' details each step and assigns responsibilities to staff and committees, facilitating effective evaluation and integration of feedback. Further support for these processes is provided by the 'Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy' and 'Course Review and Quality Assurance Procedures', which together

establish a structured framework for regular internal and external reviews aimed at maintaining high academic standards and supporting continuous improvement.

327. Aligned with this framework, the 'Job Description for Course Leaders' specifies course leaders' responsibilities, including coordinating feedback from staff and external stakeholders, implementing changes informed by course reviews and ensuring adherence to academic standards. The team's discussions with senior staff and academic staff further clarified these responsibilities, emphasising the role of course leaders in guiding ongoing evaluations and implementing improvements in response to feedback. This approach strengthens the college's framework for evaluating and enhancing academic quality.
328. The Academic Board is set to serve as the central body for the evaluation of student outcomes, establishing academic benchmarks and systematically assessing performance data to ensure that outcomes align with these standards. Reports from the Assessment Boards will be reviewed by the Academic Board to monitor the consistency and integrity of student assessments, supporting academic rigour across all programmes. Additionally, periodic internal audits and external reviews are planned within the evaluation process to maintain alignment of student outcomes with sector benchmarks and to identify areas for enhancement. This governance structure is deemed by the assessment team to be suitably designed to allow the Academic Board to adopt an evidence-based approach to monitoring, ensuring that student achievement aligns with institutional quality standards.
329. Additionally, the 'Quality Assurance System' provide a comprehensive framework for quality assurance, including mechanisms for monitoring academic standards and implementing necessary improvements. This document outlines a structured process involving regular data collection, benchmarking, and feedback from both internal and external stakeholders, contributing to the college's commitment to maintaining high academic standards. The 'Quality Assurance – Continuous Improvement Flow Chart' visually represents the continuous improvement processes within the college. These processes were further discussed with senior staff, who elaborated on how periodic reviews will be used to assess programme performance and inform improvements.
330. Finally, in line with the college's commitment to rigorous academic standards, its New DAPs plan specifies the shared responsibilities for monitoring academic quality among the Academic Board, Quality Assurance Committee, Board of Studies, Learning and Teaching Committee and academic staff, including course leaders and LSOs. This collaborative approach is intended to enable regular evaluation of student outcomes using statistical data on retention, progression and attainment. The assessment team deemed this multi-level assignment of responsibilities credible, as it demonstrates the college's commitment to establishing a comprehensive framework for continuous assessment, enhancing accountability, and supporting academic quality across programmes.
331. The assessment team also reviewed the 'External Examining Policy and Procedures', which outline the role of external examiners in providing impartial feedback on the quality and standards of academic provision. The college's plan to engage external examiners reflects its commitment to aligning academic standards with sector benchmarks and professional practices, with the expectation that external examiners will confirm alignment with the FHEQ, AHEP4, and the subject benchmark statement for engineering, thereby enhancing the overall quality assurance framework.

332. Complementing this approach, the 'External Course Review Action Plan' and 'External Review Report' establish frameworks for managing and documenting external reviews of courses. The action plan template focuses on addressing recommendations from external reviewers, while the external review report template guides reviewers in assessing programme alignment with sector-recognised standards. These documents further demonstrate the college's commitment to maintaining high academic standards through systematic external scrutiny. The assessment team deemed the process appropriate and confirmed its implementation based on the provided external review reports for the proposed programmes.
333. Based on this evidence, including insights from meetings, the assessment team concluded that the college has established clear and structured mechanisms for assigning and discharging responsibility in relation to the scrutiny and monitoring of its academic provision. These mechanisms involve a comprehensive quality assurance framework that includes regular reviews, external input, and systematic monitoring of academic standards to maintain and enhance the quality of academic provision.
334. To assess whether the college draws on ideas and expertise from within and outside the organisation in its arrangements for programme design, approval, delivery and review, the assessment team reviewed key documents including:
- 'External Examining Policy and Procedures'
  - 'Terms of Reference for the Course and Industry Advisory Committee'
  - 'New Course Development Process Flow Diagram'
  - 'Module Descriptor – Changes and Approval Process'
  - 'External Course Review Action Plan - Template'
  - 'External Review Report - Template'.
335. Additional insights were gathered through meetings with senior staff, academic staff and support staff. These documents and discussions were evaluated to determine how the college integrates external perspectives, industry standards and internal expertise to inform the continuous development and improvement of its academic provision.
336. The assessment team found that the 'External Examining Policy and Procedures' outlines the process for engaging external examiners in reviewing academic standards, assessment processes and student outcomes. This document demonstrates that the college will systematically incorporate external perspectives in evaluating academic quality and aligning it with sector standards.
337. The 'Terms of Reference for the Course and Industry Advisory Committee' highlights the role of the committee in providing external input from industry professionals, academic experts, and other external stakeholders. The committee will be tasked with advising the Academic Board on curriculum development, course reviews and industry alignment, which supports the relevance of the programmes to the needs of employers and the profession. This role was further clarified during discussions with senior staff, where they demonstrated a clear

understanding of the critical role external input plays in aligning programmes with industry standards and addressing employer needs.

338. A framework for developing new courses and revising existing ones is documented in the 'Course Development Policy and Procedures', which details procedures for internal and external review, stakeholder consultation and final approval stages. This systematic approach is designed to align new courses with academic standards, external benchmarks and industry requirements. The policy also supports the governance structure by providing a foundation for the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the college's academic offerings. The 'New Course Development Process Flow Diagram' further illustrates the steps involved in course development and outlines the responsibilities assigned to staff and committees to support effective evaluation and feedback integration. The implementation of the process for external review is evidenced in the external reviewers' reports, further confirming the application of rigorous standards during the course development process. During meetings with senior staff and academic staff, the team confirmed that the process involves both internal and external consultations, with input from external examiners and industry professionals to ensure alignment with external standards and industry needs.
339. Additionally, the external feedback mechanisms for managing and documenting external reviews of courses are explained in the 'External Course Review Action Plan' and the 'External Review Report'. These documents illustrate the college's commitment to maintaining high academic standards through systematic external scrutiny. This process was discussed with senior staff, who confirmed that external review reports are integral to assessing the effectiveness of academic provision and identifying areas for improvement.
340. Complementing this approach, the 'Module Descriptor – Changes and Approval Process' specifies how proposed changes to modules will be reviewed and approved, incorporating input from both internal staff and external stakeholders where relevant. The assessment team concluded that this process demonstrates that changes to course content, learning outcomes and assessments are informed by external expertise and feedback from industry and academic professionals.
341. To incorporate views of the student, the college has developed 'Post-Course Survey Questions Graduates and Employers' which outlines a structured feedback mechanism designed to gather insights from future graduates and their employers on the relevance and effectiveness of the degrees awarded by the college. The graduate survey intends to evaluate how well the degree prepares individuals for their current roles, assess the use of skills learned during the programme, and identify areas for potential improvement. Similarly, the employer survey is designed to gather feedback on the preparedness and competence of graduates in relation to job requirements, as well as highlight any skills gaps. The assessment team concluded that this feedback mechanism will provide the college with valuable input from key stakeholders, facilitating continuous evaluation and improvement of its higher education provision to meet industry needs and enhance graduate success. Senior staff confirmed that these feedback mechanisms will be crucial in maintaining alignment with employer expectations and ensuring programmes remain relevant to industry needs.
342. Finally, the 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy' outlines how the college plans to embed principles of EDI across its academic and operational functions. The strategy sets clear objectives for creating an inclusive environment by addressing systemic barriers to

equitable access and participation, supporting underrepresented groups, and promoting non-discriminatory practices. It highlights the college's commitment to regularly reviewing and improving policies and procedures to promote fair treatment and support for all students and staff.

343. Based on the review of these documents and the insights gathered from meetings, the assessment team concluded that the college effectively draws on both internal and external expertise in the design, approval, delivery and review of its programmes, demonstrating that its academic provision is informed by industry standards and external academic perspectives.

## **Conclusions**

344. The assessment team concluded that the college has established comprehensive mechanisms for evaluating its performance across strategic and academic domains. The New DAPs plan outlines structured processes for critical self-assessment, performance monitoring, and the integration of internal and external expertise, which are consistent with the expectations outlined in criterion E1. The assessment team formed the view that these processes will effectively support continuous improvement and align with sector benchmarks and industry standards.
345. Based on its findings, the team concluded that the college has a credible New DAPs plan and demonstrated an understanding of criterion E1 which can be reasonably expected to enable the college to meet this criterion in full by the end of the probationary period.
346. As the New DAPs plan comprehensively meets the requirements of this criterion, the assessment team did not identify any specified changes to the plan. Instead, the team recommends that the college monitors the effectiveness of these mechanisms once programmes begin, and that the planned monitoring and reporting processes are fully implemented. The college should demonstrate its commitment to self-assessment by providing regular updates on the development and implementation of these processes in its quarterly self-assessment submissions throughout the probationary period.

# Degree awarding powers overarching criterion

**New DAPs: An emerging self-critical, cohesive academic community with a clear commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective (in prospect) quality systems.**

## Advice to the OfS

347. The assessment team's view is that the college meets the overarching criterion for New DAPs because it can be reasonably expected to meet the underpinning criteria in full by the end of the probationary period.
348. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the evidence, which shows in summary that the college has credible plans to develop a self-critical and cohesive academic community. It further has a clear commitment to the assurance of standards, supported by clear quality systems which can be reasonably expected to be effective.
349. This view is based on consideration of the evidence requirements for the DAPs criteria alongside any other relevant information.

## Reasoning

350. The assessment team found that the college has credible plans to demonstrate **self-criticality** through the governance structures it has established, which are underpinned by its comprehensive policies for review and evaluation.
351. The assessment team found the college to have an emerging **cohesive academic community** as evidenced by its current staffing structures and staff engagement, in addition to the plans for recruiting and developing the academic and support staff base.
352. The college has demonstrated a **clear commitment to the assurance of standards** through explicit benchmarking against relevant external points of reference, including the FHEQ and subject benchmark statements, in addition to external and independent expertise to confirm those academic standards.
353. The assessment team considers the college to have **clear** and appropriate **quality systems** which are expected to be effective. Its quality systems are underpinned by clear governance structures and reporting lines, with policies for monitoring and review and engagement with external reference points.

## Conclusions

354. The assessment team therefore concluded that the college meets the overarching criterion as its New DAPs plan and supporting evidence demonstrates that the college has an emerging self-critical, cohesive academic community with a clear commitment to the assurance of standards as supported by effective (in prospect) quality systems.

## **New DAPs test conclusions**

### **Advice to the OfS: credibility of the New DAPs plan**

355. The assessment team's view is that the college has a credible New DAPs plan which will provide a suitable basis for monitoring and further assessment.
356. The team's view is based on its review of the evidence which shows in summary that the college's New DAPs plan demonstrates how it will meet the DAPs criteria in full by the end of the probationary period, and that these plans are comprehensive and appropriate.
357. The team considers that the college's New DAPs plan is credible in relation to the DAPs criteria and the overarching criterion, such that the college should be able to demonstrate that it will fully meet these criteria by the end of the probationary period.

### **Advice to the OfS: understanding of the DAPs criteria**

358. The assessment team's view is that the college has demonstrated a full understanding of the DAPs criteria.
359. The team's view is based on its review of the evidence, which shows in summary that the college has established a framework of academic governance to oversee a coherent higher education mission. This framework is underpinned by academic policies and a self-critical approach to evaluating its own performance. The college has transparent academic frameworks and regulations to govern the award of academic credit and qualifications, with clear mechanisms for setting and maintaining the standards of its qualifications. These meet the expectations of the FHEQ and are comparable with those of other higher education providers.
360. The team was able to confirm that the college has used its programme approval processes to design programmes that will provide its students with a high quality academic experience, which is evaluated by a range of assessment processes. These processes will be quality assured by internal and external monitoring.
361. The student learning experience will be underpinned by the recruitment of staff who are appropriately qualified, supported and developed to the levels and subjects of the qualifications to be awarded, and by the establishment of policies and procedures that should enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

### **Advice to the OfS: academic standards**

362. The assessment team's view is that the standards set by the college for the proposed courses are at an appropriate level.
363. The team's view is based on its review of the evidence which shows in summary that the college has developed regulations, policies and procedures that are robust and support the setting and maintenance of academic standards and the security of the award of credit and qualifications.

364. The evidence reviewed shows that the setting and maintenance of academic standards takes account of the appropriate reference points and external and independent points of expertise.

## **Conclusions**

365. The team therefore concluded that the college's New DAPs plan is credible and should enable the college to demonstrate that it will meet the DAPs criteria in full by the end of the probationary period.

## Annex A: Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
AHEP4	Accreditation of Higher Education Programmes, fourth edition
CIAC	Course and Industry Advisory Committee
CPD	continuing professional development
DAPs	degree awarding powers
ECT	Engineering College of Technology
EDI	equality, diversity and inclusion
EIT	Engineering Institute of Technology
FHEQ	Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HERA	Higher Education Research Act 2017
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
IET	Institution of Engineering and Technology
KPIs	key performance indicators
LSOs	Learning Support Officers
OfS	Office for Students
OIA	Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education
PSRB	professional statutory regulatory body
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for UK Higher Education
QAC	[OfS's] Quality Assessment Committee
VLE	virtual learning environment



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