Degree awarding powers (DAPs) assessment report for Luminate Education Group

Assessment for variation of degree awarding powers

Provider legal name: Luminate Education Group

Provider trading name: University Centre Leeds

UKPRN: 10024962

Assessment conducted: 22 January 2024 to 21 May 2024

Reference OfS 2024.20

Enquiries to regulation@officeforstudents.org.uk

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Executive summary

A provider that is registered with the Office for Students (OfS), and has held full degree awarding powers (DAPs) for three years or more, will normally be eligible to be considered for DAPs authorisation with no time limit, referred to as 'indefinite DAPs', irrespective of how those DAPs were awarded (e.g. by the OfS or the Privy Council).

A provider may also request to extend its DAPs authorisation, for example if it holds Foundation DAPs and wishes to extend its authorisation to Taught DAPs. In addition, a provider can also request an extension to its powers where it holds subject-specific DAPs and wishes to extend the subject areas covered by its DAPs authorisation. Such requests can only be made by providers holding either Full or indefinite DAPs authorisations.

Before making a decision about whether to vary a provider's DAPs authorisation, the OfS will undertake a DAPs assessment. The purpose of a DAPs assessment is to gather evidence to inform a judgement about whether a provider being considered for a variation of its DAPs authorisation continues to meet the DAPs criteria and has the ability to:

 • provide, and maintain the provision of, higher education of an appropriate quality

 • apply, and maintain the application of, appropriate standards to that higher education.

OfS officers will undertake an eligibility and suitability assessment of a provider, and this initial assessment will determine the scope and level of detail of the DAPs variation assessment, and whether the assessment should be desk-based in the first instance or should include at the outset a requirement to visit the provider.

DAPs assessments are conducted by assessment teams with membership that includes OfS-appointed academic experts. Assessors will have experience of higher education and knowledge relevant to those areas they are responsible for assessing. The outcome of the DAPs assessment is a report, compiled by the assessment team, summarising its findings from the assessment.

This report represents the conclusions of a DAPs assessment of a provider seeking indefinite Foundation DAPs and an extension to time-limited bachelors' level DAPs. The assessment was a desk-based assessment and did not include a visit to the provider.

This report does not represent any decision of the OfS in respect of compliance with conditions of registration.

1.   The criteria for authorisation for degree awarding powers (DAPs) are designed to ensure that a provider with DAPs demonstrates a firm guardianship of academic standards, a firm and systematic approach to the assurance of the quality of the higher education that it provides, and the capacity to contribute to the continued good standing of higher education in England. The DAPs criteria are the reference point for the DAPs assessment process and assessment

teams will assess a provider against these criteria. The full requirements of the DAPs criteria are detailed in Annex C of the OfS Regulatory framework.[1]

2. Luminate Education Group ('LEG') is an independent further education corporation, formerly known as Leeds City College Group. LEG was established in 2009 when three local colleges simultaneously dissolved and merged to form Leeds City College Group ('LCCG'). It was extended in 2011 through the incorporation of Leeds College of Music (now known as Leeds Conservatoire) and, in 2018, LCCG was awarded Foundation DAPs before changing its name to Luminate Education Group. LEG's membership was extended further with the incorporation of Harrogate College in 2019.

3. LEG now comprises five member organisations: Leeds City College, Keighley College, Harrogate College, University Centre Leeds ('UCLeeds') and Leeds Conservatoire. The members (with the exception of Leeds Conservatoire) are not separate legal entities, but operate as individual organisations with their own 'member boards' and are trading names of LEG. Although Leeds Conservatoire is a member of LEG, it is a wholly owned subsidiary of LEG and is registered with the OfS independently. For the purposes of the report, the assessment team has continued to refer to 'LEG' throughout but has identified where arrangements differ.

4. LEG's higher education provision is delivered through UCLeeds and operates its Foundation degree awarding powers and academic governance through the UCLeeds Board, on behalf of the LEG Board.

5. LEG provides a range of undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses in business and leadership, creative arts, digital technologies, engineering, health, animal management, law, science, sport, education, and travel and tourism.

6. It was awarded foundation DAPs by the Privy Council on 27 March 2018 for a period of six years. The time-limited foundation DAPs Order was due to expire on 31 August 2024.

7. In accordance with the OfS Regulatory framework and Regulatory advice 17, LEG was eligible to be considered for indefinite foundation DAPs because it had held time-limited foundation DAPs for a period of three years or more. LEG also requested to extend its DAPs authorisation to bachelors' level DAPs on a time-limited basis.

8. The OfS appointed an assessment team on 3 November 2023 which consisted of three academic expert assessors and a member of OfS staff in the following roles:

    a. Natalie Brown – committee chair and lead assessor

    b. Dr Daniel Wheatley – deputy committee chair and assessor

    c. Peter Greenall – deputy committee chair and assessor

    d. Thea Jones – committee member and assessment coordinator.

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[1] See Annex C – Guidance on the criteria for the authorisation for DAPs - Office for Students.

9. The team was asked to give its advice and judgements about the quality of and standards applied to higher education courses at LEG and whether LEG continues to meet the DAPs criteria.

10. The assessment team considered a range of information submitted by Luminate Education Group in support of its application to vary its DAPs authorisation (see Annex A).

11. Table 1 summarises the assessment team's findings regarding whether LEG continues to meet the DAPs criteria.

Table 1: Summary of findings against the DAPs criteria

Underpinning DAPs criteria	Summary
Criterion A: Academic governance	Met
Criterion B1: Regulatory frameworks	Met
Criterion B2: Academic standards	Met
Criterion B3: Quality of the academic experience	Met
Criterion C: Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of staff	Met
Criterion D: Environment for supporting students	Met
Criterion E: Evaluation of performance	Met
Overarching Full DAPs criterion	
The provider is a self-critical, cohesive academic community with a proven commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective quality systems	Met

12. This report does not represent any decision of the OfS in respect of whether the DAPs variation LEG is seeking should be authorised.

13. This report will be considered by the OfS's Quality Assessment Committee (QAC). QAC has responsibility for providing advice to the OfS under section 46 of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA) on the quality of, and standards applied to, the higher education being provided by providers for which the OfS is considering granting, varying, or (in certain circumstances) revoking, authorisation for degree awarding powers. QAC formulated its advice to the OfS regarding quality and standards at Luminate Education Group, having considered this report.

14. The OfS will have regard to this assessment report, and QAC's advice when making a decision about whether to vary LEG's DAPs authorisation on the basis requested. The OfS will also consider its own risk assessment for the provider and will have regard to 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

15. LEG was established in 2009 and operates from its campuses in Leeds, Harrogate and Keighley. Under the trading name 'University Centre Leeds', LEG offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses in business and leadership, creative arts, digital technologies, engineering, health, animal management, law, science, sport, education and travel and tourism. Prior to obtaining its own degree awarding powers, higher education courses were delivered under a validation agreement with The Open University.

16. Since gaining foundation DAPs in 2018, LEG has validated all new foundation degree provision under its own DAPs authorisation and currently delivers and awards 28 foundation degrees in subject areas related to creative arts, digital technologies, engineering, health, animal management, law, science, sport, education and travel and tourism under its own DAPs authorisation.

17. By way of progression routes to bachelors' degrees, LEG also delivers 21 Level 6 top-up degree courses and one full honours degree in subject areas related to business and leadership, creative arts, digital technologies, health, law, science, sport, education and travel and tourism. These courses are delivered under a validation agreement with The Open University. The 2016 validation agreement was renewed in 2023 and is valid until February 2028. If LEG is successful in its application to extend its DAPs authorisation to bachelors' DAPs, it plans to continue to operate under the validation agreement and take a phased approach to the revalidation of Level 6 provision.

18. LEG offers three postgraduate taught courses in Creative Practice, Biosciences and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), also under a validation agreement with The Open University.

19. LEG also delivers two Level 4 Higher National Certificate courses and two Level 5 Higher National Diploma courses in engineering, under a validation agreement with Pearson BTEC.

20. Based on the latest available OfS 'Size and shape of provision data dashboard',[2] LEG had a student population in 2021-22 of 1,660 students. This included 1,490 undergraduate students of which 330 were part-time and 160 were apprentices. There were 70 postgraduate students, of which 40 were part-time.

21. LEG reported that it currently employs 89 members of academic staff, of which 19 are part-time. There are a further 28 non-teaching members of staff employed by LEG.

22. In July 2023, LEG requested to be considered for indefinite foundation level DAPs, as it had held time-limited foundation level DAPs for three years. At the same time, LEG also applied to extend its DAPs authorisation from foundation DAPs to bachelors' DAPs.

23. In accordance with the Regulatory framework[3] and Regulatory advice 17,[4] the OfS undertook an initial eligibility and suitability assessment of LEG and decided that a desk-based DAPs

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[2] See Size and shape of provision data dashboard: Data dashboard - Office for Students.

[3] See The regulatory framework for higher education in England - Office for Students.

[4] See Regulatory advice 17: Variation and revocation of degree awarding powers - Office for Students.

assessment should be undertaken in order to gather and test evidence to inform a judgement about whether the LEG continues to meet the DAPs criteria and has the ability to:

- provide, and maintain the provision of, higher education of an appropriate quality

- apply, and maintain the application of, appropriate standards to that higher education.

24. The OfS appointed an assessment team on 3 November 2023 which consisted of three academic expert assessors and a member of OfS staff. The assessment team was asked to give its advice and judgements about the quality of, and standards applied to, higher education courses at LEG and whether LEG continues to meet the DAPs criteria.

25. The assessment team considered a range of information submitted by LEG in support of its application to vary its DAPs authorisation.

Assessment process

Information gathering

26. In accordance with the process outlined in Annex B of Regulatory advice 17,[5] LEG submitted a self-assessment document on 19 January 2024, setting out how it considered it meets the DAPs criteria for the foundation DAPs authorisation it already held. The self-assessment also set out how LEG considered it meets the criteria in the context of the additional DAPs powers sought, specifically the extension of its DAPs authorisation to bachelors' level.

27. To support the statements made in the self-assessment document, on 19 January 2024, LEG submitted a range of documentary evidence including information related to academic governance, academic regulations, policies and procedures, course documentation, student feedback and student support mechanisms.

28. Following the assessment team's review of LEG's initial evidence submission, the assessment team requested further evidence from LEG which was submitted by LEG on 27-28 February, 22 March and 25 April.

29. The assessment team undertook its desk-based assessment of LEG's evidence submission between 22 January 2024 and 26 April 2024.

30. Evidence submitted by LEG and referenced throughout this report is listed in Annex A.

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[5] See Annex B: Operational guidance for providers on assessment by the Office for Students.

Assessment of DAPs criterion A: Academic governance

Criterion A1: Academic governance

Advice to the OfS

31. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion A1: Academic governance because it meets sub-criteria A1.1, A1.2, and A1.3.

32. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows in summary that LEG has sound academic governance and management structures that deliver effective academic governance with clear and appropriate lines of accountability. It also has appropriate oversight to ensure that, if it decides to work with other organisations, these arrangements will ensure the academic standards and the quality of courses delivered by partner organisations. It engages students as partners in the academic governance and management of academic standards and quality.

33. This view is based on specific consideration of the evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

> **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

34. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion A1.1 because it has effective academic governance with clear and appropriate lines of accountability for its academic responsibilities.

35. The assessments team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows that LEG has met the evidence requirements for A1.1 and any other relevant evidence requirements.

Background

36. To inform the assessment team's consideration of its academic governance arrangements, LEG provided the following contextual information regarding its management and governance structures.

37. The UCLeeds Strategic Plan 2023-2026 sets out LEG's higher education mission and strategic direction. The plan states a firm commitment to providing high quality, accessible education that prepares students for successful careers in a rapidly changing industry. This mission is supported by the values of inclusivity, innovation, collaboration, and a supportive environment for students and staff. Strategic priorities within the plan include the development of inclusive practice, innovative practice, collaborative provision (working in partnership with employers and key stakeholders), and a supportive workforce.

38. The Board of Governors ('Group Board') is the most senior decision-making body with responsibility for the overall strategic direction and mission of LEG, including corporate and academic affairs, and the maintenance of quality and standards. In November 2022, a separate UCLeeds Board of Governors (the 'UCLeeds Board') was established as part of the LEG governance structure, and a new higher education strategy was formed to align with sector, regional and local priorities, and the regulatory framework for higher education in the UK.

39. The UCLeeds Board is comprised of 12 members, including at least one and up to two members from the Group Board. Other members include co-opted independent externals, an elected staff member, the UCLeeds Student Union Officer, and the Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The Chair of the Group Board is also entitled to attend meetings, without voting privileges. If the UCLeeds Board is unable to reach a majority decision on any recommendation, the matter is reported for determination by the Group Board.

40. The CEO is responsible for all operational and strategic matters for LEG and is accountable to the Group Board. The CEO works collectively with an executive leadership team which comprises the Deputy CEO and Executive Principal for Leeds City College, the Deputy CEO Curriculum and Quality, and two Group Vice Principals.

41. A group scheme of delegation details the delegation of responsibilities from the Group Board to the UCLeeds Board for all matters related to higher education governance. The Group Board maintains general oversight of higher education provision through reports from the UCLeeds Board. The UCLeeds Board is required to report issues to the Group Board which arise in relation to targets and key performance measures, including quality, finance, risk, and compliance with the OfS's ongoing conditions of registration.

42. The UCLeeds Academic Board ('the Academic Board') is established as the guiding academic authority of UCLeeds and is responsible for the formulation and recommendation of the academic strategy to the Group Board (with consultation via the UCLeeds Board). The Academic Board has the responsibility to maintain academic standards, enhance the quality of higher education provision, and to approve, modify, monitor, and review academic partnerships and the collaborative provision of education. The Academic Board is chaired by LEG's Deputy CEO and Executive Principal of Leeds City College. Membership of the Academic Board includes a students' union representative and membership from across the Higher Education Development Office (HEDO). This department is led by the Dean of Higher Education and has oversight and management of quality and standards for UCLeeds at an operational level, covering research and learning development, student support, registry, admissions, quality assurance, student records, widening participation and outreach.

43. The Heads of Department Meeting works beneath the Academic Board to shape the strategic direction of higher education, inform policy and curriculum development, and formulate the strategic development of teaching, learning and quality. The meeting is chaired by the Associate Dean of Higher Education, and membership includes the Dean of Higher Education and Heads of Department.

44. At a more operational level, the Programme Managers meeting focuses on quality and enhancement of all aspects of the learning cycle. The Programme Managers meeting meets every four to six weeks and is chaired by the Group Director of Higher Education Quality and

Standards. Membership also includes the Head of Research and Learning Development, Higher Education Student Support Manager and a student representative.

45. The Academic Board is supported in its academic activities by four subcommittees: the Teaching and Learning Committee, the Student Support Committee, the Widening Participation Committee and the Student Recruitment and Marketing Committee. The Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for promoting and evaluating initiatives designed to enhance the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. The Student Support Committee is responsible for sharing practices and for devising solutions to meet challenges and opportunities relating to supporting students. The Widening Participation Committee is responsible for developing and implementing strategies to improve gaps in access, continuation, and success across students from underrepresented groups. The Student Recruitment and Marketing Committee is responsible for the development and monitoring of admissions policies and procedures, the monitoring of student recruitment targets and associated marketing and recruitment activity.

46. In 2022-23, LEG decided to establish a Validations and Approvals Committee as a fifth subcommittee of the Academic Board. This was in response to a review of the effectiveness of the Programme Managers meeting, which determined that Strategic Planning Approval (SPA) applications for new programmes were not being subjected to rigorous enough discussion and analysis. The new committee will have responsibility for the monitoring and development of programme approval, validation and periodic review processes.

47. The five subcommittees meet on a termly basis and report to the Academic Board after each meeting. The work of the Academic Board and its subcommittees is reported by Academic Board to the UCLeeds Board. A report summarising the minutes of each meeting of the UCLeeds Board is presented to the subsequent Group Board meeting.

Reasoning

48. As part of its consideration of the effectiveness of academic governance and to determine whether LEG's higher education mission and strategic direction and associated policies are coherent, published, and understood, the assessment team considered the detail of the UCLeeds Strategic Plan and associated policies and procedures.

49. The assessment team found that there is cohesion between the focus of the Luminate Education Group Strategic Plan 2023-25[6] and the UCLeeds strategy, with key themes such as collaboration reflected in both. The team also found that the objectives and aims of associated academic policies are consistent with LEG's strategic mission and objectives. For example, the 'Learning and Teaching Policy' states that its aims are to ensure that all students are provided with an excellent learning experience within the changing context of learning, teaching and assessment.

50. The assessment team noted that LEG's strategic plan and the UCLeeds strategy are published on the LEG and UCLeeds websites respectively, along with supporting academic policies which have been developed specifically for LEG's higher education provision. The assessment team also noted that key academic policies, such as those relating to grievance, disciplinary and appeals procedures, are communicated to students at induction and

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[6] See https://luminate.ac.uk/statutory-information/.

referenced within programme handbooks. This ensures that students are introduced to key policies and procedures which are published and are supported in developing their understanding and relevance in relation to their studies.

51. To support their understanding of how knowledge of LEG's higher education policies and procedures are shared and understood by staff, the assessment team reviewed a sample of resources and materials used during the higher education specific induction for new staff. This forms part of LEG's induction process, detailed further in paragraph 291, and also applies to existing staff within LEG who are new to teaching higher education. The resources, such as the 'New to HE and Assessment 2022' focused on the topic of higher education assessment and grading. The resources illustrated how staff who were new to teaching higher education were supported in developing their understanding of the college higher education context in addition to effective pedagogic and academic practice. The assessment team formed the view that this approach supports staff to develop their understanding of policies and procedures.

52. The assessment team concluded that LEG's higher education mission and strategic direction and associated academic policies are published and easily accessible to staff and students. Furthermore, the team concluded that LEG has sound processes for ensuring staff understand strategic aims and policies and can apply them consistently and that this supports effective academic governance.

53. The assessment team considered the alignment between LEG's strategic aims and higher education academic policies, ensuring that aims are consistently applied in practice and demonstrate sound academic governance. The assessment team reviewed minutes from the two most recent meetings of the Academic Board, as well as a sample of minutes covering the 2018-19 to 2022-23 academic years. A board pack for the November 2023 meeting of the UCLeeds Board was also reviewed which included minutes, agenda, and associated papers for the meeting.

54. Minutes from the June 2023 meeting of the UCLeeds Board evidenced that the board robustly discussed and appropriately challenged reports. For example, the minutes from the meeting showed that the board queried risks identified within the UCLeeds risk register, including newly added risks associated with the implementation of a new student records system, a new student virtual learning environment (VLE), and a concern regarding declining recruitment within some aspects of the higher education provision. The assessment team considered that the robust discussion and appropriate challenge evidenced in UCLeeds board meetings, and the effective reporting lines between this Board and the Group Board indicates that LEG operated its academic governance arrangements effectively, with good control and clear and appropriate lines of accountability for its academic responsibilities.

55. In the minutes of the October 2023 Academic Board meeting, the assessment team noted the board's consideration of the registry validation plan, detailing programmes progressing through the validation process and any associated conditions or recommendations The minutes showed that the board had maintained effective oversight of curriculum developments. Similarly, minutes from a March 2023 meeting of the Higher Education Teaching and Learning Committee showed the committee deliberating matters associated with maintaining academic integrity given the rising prevalence of generative artificial intelligence (AI). Minutes of the subsequent Academic Board meeting in April 2023 identified

that the committee's focus on this issue was reported to the Board, which demonstrates the connection between committees and groups within the academic governance structure. Through its review of various committee papers, the assessment team concluded that LEG's higher education academic policies and therefore its strategic aims are consistently applied in practice and demonstrate effective academic governance.

56. To understand how LEG operates its academic governance arrangements, such that its academic policies support its higher education mission, aims and objectives, the assessment team reviewed a range of academic policies and frameworks, including those relating to admissions, learning and teaching and assessment.

57. The team noted that the Learning and Teaching Policy's commitment "creating a culture that provides an inspirational climate for learning; developing excellent learning relationships between students and staff […] creating innovative assessment and feedback that improves student achievement and progression" aligns with the UCLeeds' strategic themes on innovative practice, where there is a commitment to ensuring that the learning environment "fosters curiosity, critical thinking, and collaboration". This is further echoed in the LEG strategy which includes teaching excellence as a core theme. The assessment team also noted that the 'Assessment and Moderation Policy' sets out an approach to diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment, supporting students with the development of professional and academic skills. Similarly, the 'Admissions Policy' states a commitment to ensuring that applications from students of all backgrounds and abilities are welcomed to the University Centre, with an emphasis within the curriculum on providing opportunities to widen participation in higher education. This aligns closely with the commitments around access and participation stated within the inclusive practice theme of the UCLeeds strategy.

58. The team concluded that LEG's academic policies support its higher education mission, aims and objectives and underpin the delivery of effective academic governance in line with sub-criterion A1.1.

59. To test whether there is clarity and differentiation of function and responsibility at all levels in relation to academic governance, the assessment team reviewed the terms of reference of the UCLeeds Board, Academic Board and its four existing subcommittees. The assessment team also considered the Group Memorandum and Scheme of Delegation.

60. The function and responsibility of the Group Board and UCLeeds Board is set out in paragraphs 38-42, including the reporting lines between the two boards. The assessment team formed the view that the minutes of the Group Board, UCLeeds Board (discussed in paragraphs 53-54) and corresponding update reports on discussions, decisions and recommendations to the Group Board reflected their terms of reference and demonstrated clarity in the reporting relationships at the senior governance levels. For example, a report to the Group Board in July 2023 summarised the work of the UCLeeds Board which met in June 2023. The report provided a detailed overview of the matters discussed within the agenda, including proposed higher education tuition fees for the 2024-25 academic year. On this matter, the Group Board was recommended to note the tuition fee proposal and to delegate approval of the Higher Education Fees and Refunds Policy for 2024-25 to the UCLeeds Board. The minutes of the July 2023 meeting of the Group Board do not however note this formal delegation of authority to approve the fees policy. The subsequent meeting of the UCLeeds board in November 2023, noted the action regarding tuition fees, and provided an

update in the minutes stating that the proposal was to proceed with the fees as they were presented to the previous meeting. On this basis, the assessment team formed the view that there was appropriate reporting between the Group Board and the newly established UCLeeds Board, and that the isolated instance identified was considered as an administrative error.

61. Minutes of meetings of the Academic Board indicated that the agenda for the meeting incorporates discussion on matters considered in greater depth within the subcommittees. For example, widening participation and outreach discussions were routinely featured, representing the in-depth work of the Widening Participation Committee. Reporting between different levels of the academic governance structure was also evident. For example, the board pack for the UCLeeds board in November 2023 included a report from the Dean of Higher Education detailing key activities and a summary of business considered by the Academic Board. The paper also included a summary of risk management, and performance against quality and financial targets.

62. LEG also articulated the formation of a new subcommittee to the Academic Board which will focus on validations and approvals. At the time of writing the report, the committee had not sat for the first time and therefore the assessment team were unable to assess its function, apart from the narrative provided which outlined the purpose, membership, and frequency of the committee. LEG's rationale for the formation of this new committee focused on the need to provide a dedicated form for matters pertaining to curriculum development, enabling a deeper level of scrutiny of proposals brought forward.

63. The assessment team formed the view that the terms of reference for each academic board sub-committee are appropriately defined and clearly articulated, and that each committee has a distinct purpose and remit. Furthermore, the assessment team was content that committee business schedules confirmed that committees undertake business in line with their terms of reference. The assessment team noted that committee memberships were largely drawn from senior posts within the Higher Education Development Office (HEDO), with many of these being academic posts, and concluded that this was appropriate given the nature of the decisions being taken. For example, the membership of the Higher Education Student Support Committee includes the UCLeeds Student Support Manager, Learning Support Officer, Welfare and Progression Officer and Counselling and Mental Health Officers.

64. The assessment team concluded that there is clarity and differentiation of function and responsibility in relation to its academic governance structures and its arrangements for managing its higher education provision. This provided further assurance to the assessment team that LEG has effective academic governance, with clear and appropriate lines of accountability for its academic responsibilities.

65. The assessment team's review of the UCLeeds Board and Academic Board papers (see paragraphs 54-55), and the reporting up to the Group Board (see paragraph 60), enabled the team to also test whether the function and responsibility of the Academic Board is clearly articulated and consistently applied.

66. The assessment team noted that the Academic Board, as the senior academic authority, has prime responsibility for academic standards and the development, oversight and monitoring of LEG's higher education policies and provision. The Academic Board is also required to

provide assurance to the UCLeeds Board on the strategic direction of UCLeeds' academic activity. Subsequently, the UCLeeds Board reports to each quarterly meeting of the Group Board, summarising matters discussed and any actions requiring a decision from the Group Board.

67. The minutes of meetings of the Academic Board reviewed by the assessment team demonstrated the effective operation of the Academic Board within its terms of reference. The assessment team also found that substantive items of business from each of the four subcommittees are regularly submitted to Academic Board for its consideration. The assessment team determined that the Academic Board provides robust challenge on agenda items as appropriate and sets targets across the UCLeeds provision for improvement and enhancement to academic activities. Furthermore, the UCLeeds board is kept fully aware of the key matters considered by Academic Board through a report from the Dean of Higher Education at each meeting (see paragraph 61). Furthermore, the assessment team noted in meeting minutes from both the Academic Board and the UCLeeds Board that there is alignment between the business considered and reported on by the two boards on a range of academic matters. Examples included an alignment between reports considered by the Academic Board and agenda items within the UCLeeds Board meetings, including topics such as recruitment, strategy development and monitoring, regulatory matters, and quality.

68. The assessment team concluded that the function and responsibility of the senior academic authority is clearly articulated and consistently applied and that it maintains appropriate accountability for, and good oversight of, its academic responsibilities.

69. To determine if there is appropriate depth and strength of academic leadership, the assessment team reviewed LEG's organisational chart as well as the CVs of the senior leadership team and profiles of members of the Group Board which are available via the LEG website.

70. The assessment team noted from LEG's organisational chart that the executive leadership team is headed by the Group CEO and comprises the Group Vice Principal Adults, Deputy CEO & Executive Principal Leeds City College, Deputy CEO Curriculum & Quality, and the Group Vice Principal Development. The assessment team noted that the organisational chart sets out clear roles and reporting lines for each of the executive leadership team. The executive leadership team has the greatest responsibility for academic governance, linking most closely to the Group Board. The executive leadership team is further supported by a much larger senior leadership team, which includes the Dean of Higher Education as the senior leader for UCLeeds and HEDO. The executive leadership team and the Dean of Higher Education form the primary membership of the UCLeeds board to provide focused scrutiny, challenge, and deliberation on higher education matters.

71. The 'HEDO Structure Chart' demonstrates that the Dean of Higher Education has overall senior leadership responsibility for LEG's higher education provision. The role reports directly to LEG's Deputy CEO and is supported by the Associate Dean and Group Director of Higher Education Quality & Standards who have responsibility for curriculum and line management of each curriculum Head of Department, and the leadership and management of LEG's quality, registry and student support functions respectively.

72. The assessment team considered a representative sample of CVs selected from the HEDO structure chart by the assessment team. The sample included the Dean of Higher Education, Group Director of Quality and Standards, the Associate Dean of Higher Education, the Director of Marketing, and the Higher Education Registrar. The assessment team found that the senior leaders have significant breadth and depth of senior level higher education experience and knowledge. For example, the Dean of Higher Education holds a Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) and has over 30 years' experience in education, having occupied various higher education management roles for the past 13 years. In addition, the assessment team reviewed the online biographies of members of the Group Board and found that there was a range of significant senior leadership experience from both public and private sector industries including education and business.[7] Minutes of the Group Board illustrated strong representation from governors at meetings, indicating an active involvement from board members.

73. The assessment team also reviewed a sample of CVs and qualifications of all Heads of Department and found that they too had significant senior level higher education experience and knowledge together with professional qualifications appropriate to their roles.

74. The assessment team concluded from its review of evidence of the qualifications and experience of senior leaders and heads of department that LEG has in place appropriate depth and strength of academic leadership to support its academic functions.

75. To determine whether LEG develops, implements and communicates its policies and procedures in collaboration with its staff and students and external stakeholders, the assessment team reviewed the terms of reference, membership and committee papers from a range of academic committees and working groups with a remit to develop or contribute to the development of academic policies and processes.

76. The assessment team noted that students, as well as teaching and professional support staff, are represented in the membership of a range of academic committees and working groups. For instance, the Academic Board membership includes a representative from the students' union and representatives from the UCLeeds student body are included in the membership of the HE Student Support Committee and HE Widening Participation Committee. Teaching staff are also represented at the Academic Board subcommittees. Minutes of the Academic Board meetings indicated that students occasionally participated in the discussion of agenda items, although this was not consistent. The assessment team did however recognise the breadth of student engagement at LEG, as articulated in the Student Engagement Policy and were reassured that students were consulted and engaged in a range of matters relating to quality improvement and enhancement. The team also noted that equality impact assessments require input from the students' union executive team on student facing policies.

77. The assessment team also considered an example of how proposed changes to policies and procedures were developed and communicated to staff, students and external stakeholders in practice. In a meeting of the Heads of Department in December 2022, a discussion took place regarding higher education tuition fees for 2024-25. The minutes of the meeting noted that the Dean of Higher Education requested for all members present to consider a proposed increase of five per cent, and to discuss the proposal with their teams. A subsequent paper presented

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[7] See https://luminate.ac.uk/governance/.

to the UCLeeds Board in November 2022 presents further detail of this proposal, with a recommendation for the board to discuss the proposals and put forward recommendations for action. The minutes of the Heads of Department Meeting in March 2023 evidence a detailed discussion on the proposed fee increase, with input from across the membership. The matter was discussed further at the April 2023 minutes of Academic Board, representing an evolution of the proposal to a 10 per cent fee increase. A revised paper was then presented to the UCLeeds Board in June 2023, requesting that the board supports the proposals and recommends the revised policy to the Group Board in July 2023. The meeting of the UCLeeds Board also included representation from a student member. The assessment team formed the view that LEG develops, implements and communicates its policies and procedures in collaboration with its staff and students and external stakeholders thus further ensuring that LEG operates effective academic governance.

78. The assessment team considered LEG's validation agreement with The Open University and its use of foundation DAPs to date to better understand how it would successfully manage the responsibilities that would be vested in it were it to be granted indefinite foundation DAPs and time-limited bachelors' level DAPs.

79. LEG currently works under a validation agreement with The Open University. LEG obtained foundation DAPs in 2018 and has since been utilising its powers to revalidate foundation degrees previously validated by The Open University, while teaching out the provision for students already enrolled on those programmes.

80. The assessment team noted that LEG had reviewed staffing capacity within HEDO since gaining foundation DAPs which had resulted in new roles being created and existing roles updated, including a Group Director of Quality and Standards, Data Analyst and Deputy Head of Quality. Quality assurance systems and processes for the planning, development and delivery of programmes were also reviewed and updated to ensure they were clearly articulated and distinct from LEG's further education provision.

81. LEG currently utilises a system of spreadsheets to collate assessment results and present information to its Board of Examiners meetings. The implementation of a higher education student record system is currently underway but has faced setbacks in testing. Papers for the meeting of the UCLeeds Board in November 2023 referenced the delayed implementation, which was previously an identified risk within the risk register but was removed in the meeting. The paper proposed that the risk was now accounted for in the newly established Group Higher Education Quality and Standards Directorate. It is anticipated that the student record system will further strengthen LEG's approach to manage the responsibilities and complexities of managing student information to support the award of higher education qualifications. The assessment team were, however, satisfied that the current systems in place were adequate, and that this development, while delayed in implementation, reflected an enhancement to current practice.

82. In conclusion, the assessment team formed the view that LEG has effective academic governance structures, together with clear and appropriate lines of accountability. The assessment team therefore considers that LEG is successfully managing the responsibilities under its current foundation DAPs authorisation and will continue to do so in respect of an extension to bachelor's DAPs.

Advice to the OfS

83. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion A1.2 because its academic governance is conducted in partnership with its students.

84. The assessments team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows that LEG has met the evidence requirements for A1.2 and any other relevant evidence requirements.

Reasoning

85. In considering the extent to which LEG engages students as partners in the academic governance of its higher education provision, the assessment team reviewed the 'Student Engagement Policy' which states a commitment to ensuring that there are mechanisms in place for the management of quality and standards through student engagement and partnership. The policy states that students will have formal opportunities through a range of quality assurance and enhancement activities, including module and programme evaluation and review and representation on committees, boards and working groups. This approach was found to be evident within the terms of reference for both the Academic Board and UCLeeds Board, which include membership from the students' union. Two of the terms of reference for the subcommittees to the Academic Board (the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Student Recruitment Committee) did not however explicitly incorporate student membership.

86. The assessment team reviewed evidence of feedback being gathered from students through course committee and student rep meetings, including evidence that the feedback had been actioned upon and received positively by students. For example, students studying on computing courses were noted to have requested further input from industry professionals and guest speakers during a student rep meeting in September 2023. Following a series of eight guest speakers, students were then asked for feedback via email from the course tutor, to which several students responded positively to the enhancement. The assessment team therefore considered that, while there was some misalignment between the intent of student engagement and its implementation within the subcommittees (as discussed in paragraph 85), there was sufficient evidence of student engagement within LEG's higher education academic governance arrangements.

87. Student voice was strengthened further through the introduction of the new Higher Education Student Engagement Officer role in 2019 to further enhance the sense of community and partnership within the student body, and to provide dedicated support to student representatives. LEG cited a year-on-year decrease in the number of student representatives taking up the role, but there is a stronger level of engagement in the associated training with 82 per cent completion in 2022-23.

88. The assessment team found that students were given a range of opportunities to engage in quality assurance and enhancement. One such example involved the use of a focus group to gather views and opinions of students on the reduction of the length of each semester from 15 to 13 weeks, with two weeks at the end of teaching dedicated to assessment workshops

and drop-in sessions. The outcome of the consultation, including a summary of the student feedback gained through the focus groups, was summarised in a report to the Academic Board. The report suggests that students were broadly supportive of the change, but had raised some concerns and suggestions. The report included a clear outline of the issues raised by students and the proposed mitigations or solutions. The assessment team concluded that this demonstrated effective student consultation on matters impacting upon the student experience.

89. In 2014, student views were sought on the effectiveness of student representative meetings. The review resulted in enhanced training for student representatives and the introduction of a lead student representative, who would attend cross-group boards and committees. The team observed that post-pandemic take-up of the lead representative role when it was relaunched in 2022-23 was limited but increased to six representatives in the following year with a more positive impact.

90. The assessment team noted a range of formal mechanisms through which students were able to provide feedback, including an application, enrolment and induction survey, module surveys, Award Committee meetings, peer review opportunities and end of programme surveys. Students attending the end of year programme Award Committee meetings were also given the opportunity to meet with the Higher Education Student Engagement Officer (an individual independent to the programme) as another feedback route. This is in addition to engagement in the National Student Survey, where LEG has increased participation rates from 66 per cent in 2017 to 73 per cent in 2024.

91. From the evidence reviewed, the assessment team concluded that student partnership and student engagement were integral components of LEG's approach to academic governance. Through student representation at the Academic Board and the UCLeeds Board, students are engaged as partners in the leadership and governance of higher education provision within LEG.

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

92. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion A1.3 because where LEG 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.

93. The assessments team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows that LEG has met the evidence requirements for A1.3 and any other relevant evidence requirements.

Reasoning

94. LEG works with a range of employers to provide work placements linked to higher education programmes and apprenticeships. To determine the effectiveness of LEG's governance and

management arrangements where it works with other organisations, the assessment team reviewed an example employer handbook from 2022-23 for the Foundation Degree Healthcare Assistant Practitioner programme. The employer handbook details the responsibilities of employers providing work placement opportunities to students, including those relating to health and safety, induction, supervision, insurance, conduct, Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks, and equality and diversity. The handbook also incorporates excerpts from relevant group policies, and a template for a formal agreement to be signed by both the employer and UCLeeds.

95. For higher and degree apprenticeships, mechanisms are in place to assess the suitability of an employer before an apprentice is placed. These include the signing of a contract agreement, health and safety checks, a training needs analysis, and an employer job analysis to ensure that the job role meets the requirements of the proposed apprenticeship standard. Once an apprentice is placed, a learner skills scan is undertaken to identify any knowledge, skills or behaviours which the individual has already attained at the start of the placement.

96. LEG stated that higher education learning opportunities are not currently subcontracted to other partners, but outlined an approach which would be taken in such circumstances, with providers submitting information specified within a checklist, prior to LEG undertaking a financial and credit check. Staff involved in subcontracted delivery would also be required to submit CVs and evidence of qualifications, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and DBS checks.

97. The assessment team sought further assurance from LEG with regards to any plans to enter into validation or subcontractual arrangements with other providers. The group stated that there were no current plans to enter into validation or subcontractual arrangements with other providers, but it recognised that this is something which may be considered in the future. Such proposals would undergo a rigorous due diligence process, incorporating a thorough assessment of the potential partner's capacity for delivery and quality assurance arrangements. LEG also recognised that additional staffing capacity to oversee validation partnerships would be required.

98. Based on the evidence reviewed, the assessment team concluded that LEG has appropriate arrangements to facilitate effective working with other organisations to deliver learning opportunities. These opportunities primarily relate to employer partnerships for work placements and apprenticeship programmes. Subcontracted arrangements for teaching and learning are not currently a feature of LEG's higher education provision; however, an approach to assessing suitability was clearly articulated. Furthermore, validation arrangements with other providers are not currently planned; however, the assessment team were satisfied that LEG recognises the risk and additional responsibilities that such developments would pose.

Conclusions

99. The assessment team concluded that LEG has effective and robust arrangements for academic governance, with sound academic structures and clear lines of accountability. At senior governance levels, the Group Board and UCLeeds Board provide structured academic oversight of higher education provision, with effective reporting lines between them. The Academic Board, as the most senior academic authority, provides assurance to the UCLeeds Board on academic matters, which in turn offers effective oversight and challenge. The

function of the Academic Board is clearly defined through its terms of reference and membership. The supporting subcommittees are also clearly defined, with a new subcommittee having been established to facilitate a greater level of scrutiny and deliberation on programme approvals and validations. Leadership roles surrounding the higher education provision demonstrate breadth and strength of academic leadership to ensure the effective operation of academic governance arrangements. Academic policies and procedures are developed collaboratively with staff, students, and where appropriate, external stakeholders.

100. The assessment team also concluded that LEG engages appropriately and consistently with students in the control and oversight of higher education provision, and that mechanisms are in place to collate and respond to student feedback.

101. The assessment team further concluded that where LEG works in partnership with other organisations to deliver learning opportunities, appropriate and robust arrangements in place to ensure that such arrangements are effectively managed. The assessment team were assured that decisions to work with other providers were taken strategically, with appropriate scrutiny and due diligence to ensure that arrangements are robust and ensure effective delivery.

102. The assessment team formed the overall view that LEG has effective governance structures and clear and appropriate lines of accountability. There is assurance that LEG is effectively managing the responsibilities under its current DAPs authorisation and will continue to do so in respect of any extension of this authorisation.

Assessment of DAPs criterion B: Academic standards and quality assurance

Criterion B1: Regulatory frameworks

Advice to the OfS

103. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion B1: Regulatory frameworks because it meets sub-criteria B1.1 and B1.2.

104. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows, in summary, that LEG has in place transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how it awards qualifications. LEG also maintains a definitive record of all programmes and qualifications that it approves (and of subsequent changes) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of each programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

105. This view is based on specific consideration of the evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

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

106. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion B1.1 as it has in place transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how it awards academic credit and qualifications.

107. The assessments team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows that LEG has met the evidence requirements for B1.1 and any other relevant evidence requirements.

Reasoning

108. To determine whether academic frameworks and regulations governing LEG's higher education provision are appropriate to its current status and implemented fully and consistently, the assessment team reviewed LEG's regulatory framework, associated policies and monitoring mechanisms. The regulatory framework and associated policies and procedures were developed and implemented in readiness for it entering into a validation partnership with The Open University in 2016. The process involved a mapping exercise being undertaken in line with The Open University's regulations for validated awards to identify which policies, procedures and regulations would apply to students studying on a programme delivered by UCLeeds and validated by The Open University. The document confirmed the use of LEG's higher education policies and procedures and The Open University's academic regulations. LEG's 'Foundation Degree Academic Regulations' and associated policies and procedures were developed in preparation for its original application for foundation DAPs and have been in place since foundation DAPs were granted in 2018. LEG's academic regulations underwent a full review most recently in 2020 when the

'Foundation Degree Academic Regulations' were replaced by 'Higher Education Academic Regulations' to reflect the regulatory requirements for bachelors' and masters' degree awards. The assessment team considered the content of LEG's higher education academic regulations and their appropriateness for foundation DAPs and the award of academic credit and qualifications up to and including Level 6, and concluded that LEG's higher education academic regulations are transparent and comprehensive in their coverage for both foundation DAPs and in respect of an extension to bachelors' DAPs.

109. LEG has in place a comprehensive set of higher education policies to underpin its higher education academic regulations, including those relating to student admissions, academic misconduct, appeals and complaints and other areas of provision, designed and introduced based on the UK Quality Code. The implementation of policies is supported through associated procedures such as the 'Approval and Review of Programmes Policy', which is operationalised through validation procedures and associated guidance provided to staff, including the 'Approval, Review and Modification Handbook', and staff training administered through the Developing Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Research (DELTAR) programme. Consideration of the suitability and effectiveness of policies and processes forms part of LEG's Higher Education Annual Review process. The assessment team reviewed examples of reviews from 2021-22 and 2022-23 and were satisfied that appropriate consideration is given to the effectiveness of policies and processes.

110. Full and consistent application of LEG's higher education regulations is achieved and monitored through several mechanisms, including examination board reports, external examiner reports and the appointment of a Chief External Examiner. The assessment team reviewed examples from the 2022-23 academic year, including a copy of The Open University's report on the March 2023 Progression and Award Board for programmes validated by The Open University. The assessment team also reviewed the UCLeeds Chief External Examiner Report and noted reference to the consistent application of academic standards across programmes and established quality assurance processes. The assessment team further noted through their review of minutes of the Joint Module Assessment and Progression Boards, as well as a copy of The Open University Exam Board Report that there was evidence of good practice in the communication of the academic regulations at the outset of examination boards, and consistent treatment and application of the regulations across Level 4 to Level 7 programmes. Following the review of evidence of these monitoring mechanisms, it is the assessment team's view that there is consistent and appropriate application of academic regulations.

111. The assessment team noted evidence of regular reflection on, and amendments to, policies and procedures. For example, the assessment team reviewed a paper presented to Academic Board in September 2022, which outlined details of the review of, and any proposed amendments to, policies including the Recognition of Prior Learning policy and LEG's higher education academic regulations.

112. Following a comprehensive review of LEG's regulatory framework, and its mechanisms for monitoring and review of its effective operation, it is the assessment team's view that the policies, procedures and guidance developed and in place sufficiently cover all aspects of regulatory requirements, meeting the requirements of criterion B1a.

113. To understand whether LEG has created, in readiness, one or more academic frameworks and regulations which will be appropriate for the granting of its own higher education qualifications, the assessment team undertook a review of the academic regulations in place at LEG. As outlined in paragraph 108, a full review of LEG's academic regulations was conducted in 2020 when the 'Foundation Degree Academic Regulations' were replaced by 'Higher Education Academic Regulations' to reflect the regulatory requirements for bachelors' and masters' degree awards. The assessment team noted good practice in LEG's regular review of its regulations, including an amendment in 2022-23 to how marginal fails were handled within the regulations. The amendment was made to address a perceived gap in the regulations which did not state the need for all components of an assessment to be submitted and included in calculations of a student's overall module grades in the case of a marginal fail. The assessment team formed the view that this demonstrates LEG's ongoing review of the appropriateness of its higher education regulations, to ensure that it meets the DAPs criteria for both its current operation of foundation DAPs and in respect of an extension to bachelor's DAPs. Further scrutiny of LEG's higher education academic regulations has been undertaken in the form of an audit conducted by The Open University in March 2022, which confirmed the suitability of LEG's higher education academic framework and regulations for awards validated by The Open University, up to and including Level 6. Similarly, the assessment team formed the view that LEG's higher education regulations and academic framework are appropriate for granting of awards up to and including Level 6. The next internal review of LEG's academic regulations is planned for August 2024.

114. Following a review of its current higher education academic regulations and academic frameworks, it is the assessment team's view that LEG's academic regulations and frameworks are comprehensive and clear, providing a suitable basis for the delivery of higher education qualifications. The regulations, policies and procedures are appropriate to its current status in holding foundation DAPs, and in the assessment teams view, are appropriate for an extension of powers to bachelor's DAPs.

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

Advice to the OfS

115. It is the assessment team's view that LEG meets criterion B1.2 as it 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 each programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

116. The assessments team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows that LEG has met the evidence requirements for B1.2 and any other relevant evidence requirements.

Reasoning

117. The assessment team considered whether definitive and up-to-date records of each qualification to be awarded and each programme being offered by LEG are being maintained, and whether these records are used as the basis for the delivery and assessment of each

programme. LEG outlined that it maintains a definitive record of each course and its approved validated awards, whether under its own awarding powers or validated by The Open University. Modifications to programme documentation, including the programme specification, are monitored through a 'Modification and Version Tracker' which also captures the date of validation, the awarding body and whether validated for full and/or part-time study. The assessment team reviewed the tracker and agreed that it demonstrated good practice in the monitoring of changes to courses validated between 2015-16 and 2022-23; examples are the movement of modules between semesters for the Foundation Degree Acting programme, and document version control for programme and module specifications. Course approval operates on a five-year cycle, with lifespan monitored via a 'Validation Planning Tracker', which lists the dates of the last validation and planned academic year for revalidation for each course. The assessment team reviewed these recording systems and tools and concluded that the current systems effectively enable recording of programme approvals and modifications, providing LEG with necessary oversight over its course portfolio.

118. An Annual Planning and Monitoring event provides a central process whereby any requested modifications to programmes are considered and approved by a panel of representatives from HEDO, including the Dean of Higher Education (the Chair) and the Head of Quality and Student Support. The event is attended by representatives from all areas of the curriculum. Once approved, any changes to the delivery or assessment of a programme are recorded in the Modification and Version Tracker, which includes details of modifications made and when the changes were approved. LEG outlined that supporting quality assurance processes are in place including checks conducted by course managers and the Higher Education Registrar. The final definitive documentation is also shared in a 'read only' format to ensure correct version control. Further details of course modification and approval are covered under section B2.2, paragraphs 141-143. The evidence reviewed by the assessment team confirmed that these systems are appropriate and enable an adequate mechanism for the accurate recording of all modifications to courses of study, while use of a single annual event for modifications allows for oversight and coordination to ensure the quality and standards of awards. The assessment team were satisfied with the consistency in recording between the content of the Modification and Version Tracker and the minutes of the 2022-23 Annual Planning Event, for example in outlining changes made to assessments on the LLB (Hons) Law. Together with the definitive records noted in paragraph 117, these mechanisms for monitoring modifications enable a definitive and up-to-date record of each qualification to be awarded and programme offered to be maintained.

119. To determine if there was evidence that students and alumni are provided with records of study, the assessment team considered the processes which take place following an award board. LEG detailed that a transcript is produced by Registry for all students following a Progression and Award Board, which confirms each individual student's grade profile and outcome for the academic year. These are released to students once ratified by the validating body applicable). The team also reviewed copies of exemplar templates for diploma supplements for qualifications validated by both LEG and The Open University. Supplements for students are produced following an exam board, and provide a record which is individual to each student and includes the name and level of the qualification and modules studied, the awarding institution, the total number of credits achieved and the overall classification. The assessment team were satisfied that the content of the diploma supplements and associated

processes provide sufficient evidence that students and alumni are provided with records of study.

120. LEG set out that a new student information system (SIS) is in the process of being procured and implemented which will enhance and streamline operations of curriculum versioning and award board processes replacing some manual operations, including inputting into Excel spreadsheets, to support centralised monitoring and oversight and record keeping throughout the student journey. While the current manual processes fulfil the requirements of B1.2, the assessment team identified that scaling these up across more qualifications and larger student numbers could be challenging but the planned new SIS will offer an appropriate method of supporting this process. LEG outlined that full implementation of the new SIS is planned by December 2024, with the roll out completed in stages and parallel use of existing systems to mitigate risks such as potential data loss, during this period.

121. While the implementation of the new SIS is not integral to the successful delivery and assessment of each programme, the assessment team noted from a report to the February 2024 Academic Board meeting that the risk register is marked as red for the SIS due to acknowledged 'under-resourcing' resulting in a risk that the project will likely not be completed on time. The integration with 'cross-domain' systems is also highlighted as an area of concern, but the paper reported that additional resource has been directed to this project to address the identified risk. The assessment team concluded that LEG maintains definitive and up-to-date records of each qualification to be awarded and each programme being offered, and that these records are used as the basis for the delivery and assessment of each programme and there is evidence that students and alumni are provided with records of study.

Conclusions

122. The assessment team have considered the evidence provided by LEG and it is the assessment team's overall view that it meets criterion B1: Regulatory frameworks.

123. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence, particularly focused on how LEG operates its regulatory frameworks for higher education, including academic regulations, policies, procedures and guidance. The assessment team additionally reviewed evidence of the mechanisms for monitoring the effective implementation and application of regulations, including examination board reports, and Chief External Examiner reports. The assessment team concluded that the evidence reviewed is consistent with LEG having in place appropriate regulatory frameworks and associated policies, procedures and guidance, and effective monitoring mechanisms to meet the requirements of sub-criterion B1.1.

124. Through scrutiny of LEG's recording and tracking systems, including those relating to the student journey, programme validation, approval and modification the assessment team concluded that LEG effectively maintains a definitive record of each programme and qualification that it approves (and subsequent changes to it), which are used as the basis for the delivery and assessment of each programme, its monitoring and review, and the provision of records of study to students and alumni. As such, the assessment team are satisfied that LEG meets the requirements of sub-criterion B1.2.

Criterion B2: Academic standards

Advice to the OfS

125. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion B2: Academic standards because it meets sub-criteria B2.1 and B2.2.

126. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows in summary that LEG has clear and consistently applied mechanisms for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its higher education qualifications. LEG has also demonstrated that it is able to design and deliver courses and qualifications that correspond to the threshold academic standards and credit volumes specified within the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The standards it sets and maintains above the threshold are reliable over time and reasonably comparable to those set and achieved by other UK degree awarding bodies.

127. This view is based on specific consideration of the evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

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

128. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion B2.1 as it has clear and consistently applied mechanisms for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its higher education qualifications.

129. The assessments team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows that LEG has met the evidence requirements for B2.1 and any other relevant evidence requirements.

Reasoning

130. As set out in the introduction and background to this report, LEG offers higher education qualifications from Foundation Year 0 to Level 7 in a variety of subject areas, including creative arts, animal management, travel and tourism, health, sport, computing, biosciences and education. All but three foundation degrees are validated under its foundation DAPs, with Level 6 top-up awards, bachelors' and masters' degrees currently validated through its partnership with The Open University.

131. The assessment team undertook a comprehensive review of evidence to determine whether LEG higher education qualifications are offered at levels that correspond to the relevant levels of the FHEQ of UK Degree Awarding Bodies. The assessment team reviewed LEG's higher education academic regulations which were updated in 2020 and implemented to reflect the partner requirements for bachelors' and masters' degrees validated by The Open University (see paragraph 108). The team also considered relevant academic policies relating to the approval and review of courses, the Higher Education Quality Handbook and examples of programme validation documentation covering the various stages of the programme development process. The team further reviewed minutes from two foundation degree

validation events from 2021-22 and 2022-23 for Foundation Degree Production Arts and Foundation Degree Beauty, Communications and Promotion.

132. The assessment team scrutinised programme-level documentation to test whether mechanisms for ensuring higher education qualifications are offered at levels that correspond to the relevant levels of the FHEQ are consistently applied. LEG set out that programme and module learning outcomes are categorised at each level into 'Knowledge and Understanding', 'Cognitive and Intellectual', 'Skills and Competencies', and 'Key Transferable Skills'. The assessment team reviewed a sample of nine course specifications across Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7, including those for Foundation Degree Business, Enterprise and Management, Foundation Degree Film and Screen Media, Foundation Degree Health Play Specialism, LLB (Hons) Law and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). The assessment team additionally scrutinised module-level documentation comprising a combination of six module specifications and module handbooks, including common modules such as the Level 4 Academic Toolkit, which are taught across multiple courses. From the review of evidence, it is the assessment team's view that programme learning outcomes are aligned appropriately with the relevant qualification descriptors at Levels 4, 5 and 6 of the FHEQ.

133. From the review of course specifications undertaken, the team noted that programme learning outcomes are specified at each level of qualification to enable clear evidence of progression of learning. The team also noted that guidance is provided to course teams on the use of level-appropriate verbs in learning outcomes. This was evident in the documents including the 'Approval, Review and Modification Handbook' which outlines procedures for course design, development and approval, and staff training materials on course design, development and approval (see B2.2, paragraph 141). Evidence, including moderation documentation and external examiner reports, was also reviewed by the assessment team confirming that assessment tasks are subject to internal scrutiny by course teams and external scrutiny by external examiners, to ensure that they meet knowledge and skills requirements appropriate to the level of qualification. Moderation processes for the setting and grading of assessments are further used to ensure consistency and quality in grading (see paragraph 203 and 204), and exit arrangements and awards are articulated in the academic regulations.

134. The assessment team formed the view that LEG's higher education qualifications are offered at levels that correspond to the relevant levels of the FHEQ and that mechanisms for setting and maintaining the academic standards are consistently applied.

135. The assessment team found that LEG's academic regulations and its quality management framework, as operated by UCLeeds, identify external reference points and independent points of expertise which must be considered in the setting and maintaining of academic standards. The assessment team noted that both the academic regulations and quality handbook clearly state that LEG's higher education qualifications must align to the FHEQ and take account of relevant external reference points including subject benchmarks, external examiners and Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements. The assessment team were satisfied from the review of evidence that qualifications are mapped to relevant subject benchmarks and PSRBs, apprenticeship standards, and occupational standards, the latter of which is evidenced through the successful mapping and approval of awards as Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), including for example Foundation Degree Health Play Specialism. Although not a regulatory requirement, the assessment team viewed

these mapping exercises as evidence of good practice in the use of external reference points in the setting and maintaining of academic standards. Course teams are required to consult with employers, students and external examiners in the development, review and modification of programmes. The assessment team reviewed evidence of employer consultation embedded in the validation process (see paragraph 159). Student consultation was also present in evidence reviewed by the assessment team, including validation documentation for Foundation Degree Production Arts. The assessment team concluded that these processes are effectively embedded throughout the procedures for validation and modification of courses. In its review of documentation relating to stages of the approval and validation of the Foundation Degree Beauty, Communications and Promotion and Foundation Degree Production Arts, from the 2021-22 and 2022-23 academic years, the assessment team saw evidence of consultation with relevant external reference points and expertise. The assessment team were satisfied that engagement with various stakeholders was being incorporated into course design, development and approval effectively, including students, external examiners, PSRBs, local and national employers.

136. The assessment team observed that external examiners are a key source of external expertise used to support the maintenance of academic standards by LEG. Course teams are required to consult external examiners on any proposed programme modifications. External examiners input into ongoing quality assurance through external moderation of assessments and feedback provided in their annual reports. Annual external examiner reports are monitored by the Academic Board via an overview report. The assessment team reviewed 12 annual external examiner reports and responses provided by LEG from academic years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23, and courses including Foundation Degree Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Foundation Degree Physical Education and Sports Coaching and Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) Film and Screen Media. It is the view of the assessment team that the feedback on academic standards provided by external examiners was consistent and valuable, providing confirmation that appropriate standards had been set for qualifications. The assessment team noted in its review of feedback from external examiners' reports that LEG demonstrated good practice in the use of authentic assessment design and positive progress year-on-year in the consistency and quality of assessment grading and feedback. Examples of external examiner consultation were also reviewed by the assessment team including for assessment changes.

137. The assessment team concluded that LEG fulfils the requirements of criterion B2.1 as it has in place clear and consistently applied mechanisms for setting and maintaining the academic standards of its higher education qualifications. These mechanisms are consistently applied and include an appropriate account of relevant external reference points.

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 Frameworks 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

138. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion B2.2 because it designs and delivers courses and qualifications that meet the threshold academic standards described in the FHEQ. Furthermore, LEG demonstrated that the standards that it sets and maintains above the threshold are reliable over time and reasonably comparable to those set and achieved by other UK degree awarding bodies.

139. The assessments team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows that LEG meets the evidence requirements for B2.2 and any other relevant evidence requirements.

Reasoning

140. The assessment team reviewed evidence regarding arrangements for course design, development and approval throughout the stages of the course validation cycle, to confirm that throughout the development process, course development teams robustly ensured that academic standards remained aligned to the threshold standards of the FHEQ. LEG set out that following a 2022-23 review of validation procedures it would be implementing a new Validations and Approvals Committee in the 2023-24 academic year, which will have responsibility for the monitoring and development of course validation and periodic review processes. The Validations and Approvals Committee will be chaired by the Deputy Head of Quality and will monitor the validation procedures, including ensuring approval actions, conditions and recommendations are completed. The committee will report to the Academic Board on activity, confirming approvals. The assessment team acknowledged this planned change and the potential benefits it offers to LEG through providing a dedicated committee for the governance of validations and approvals. The assessment team further noted that the introduction of the new committee does not substantively change the procedures around validation and approvals, and as such the evidence of existing arrangements provided a suitable basis upon which to assess whether LEG meets the requirements of B2.2.

141. To understand the appropriateness of arrangements for course design, development and approval, the assessment team reviewed: the 'Approval and Review of Programmes Policy'; the 'Approval, Review and Modification Handbook'; staff training materials related to course design offered as part of LEG's DELTAR training programme, development and approval; and example validation documentation including templates, minutes of validation meetings, and course documentation for Foundation Degree Production Arts and Foundation Degree Beauty, Communications and Promotion. Following this review, the assessment team was satisfied that academic standards were being maintained. The assessment team found evidence of course and module learning outcomes undergoing scrutiny throughout the stages

of the validation procedure, including by the Associate Dean of Higher Education, to ensure they are appropriate for the level of award and develop relevant knowledge and skills. Members of the Validation Panel are also invited to review and comment on the general assessment strategy and methods of assessment for the proposed programme, in line with LEG's programme approval procedures. The assessment team noted that an internal audit, conducted on behalf of LEG in March 2023, identified the need to update the existing programme Approval, Review and Modification Handbook as the version of the document dated back to 2018. However, the assessment team noted in their review of the documentation that the handbook has since been updated, with the latest version dated September 2023. Overall, it is the assessment team's view that course development and approval arrangements are sufficiently clear and consistently applied.

142. The assessment team reviewed documentation relating to the various stages of LEG's course approval and review procedure. It sets out that course validation and approval operates through several committees. The Programme Managers meeting has historically had oversight of validation and approval, monitoring progress through the stages of course design, development and approval and periodic review. This oversight will now transfer to the new Validations and Approvals Committee as outlined in paragraph 140. In the initial stage of the validation process, business cases (captured via the SPA document) are approved by Academic Board. Following interim stages of the approval procedure, the Validation Panel (chaired by the Associate Dean of Higher Education) operates as the final stage of course approval. Once approved, validations are then confirmed at Academic Board.

143. The assessment team's review included the Validation Panel minutes which provide a summary of the presentation of courses and discussion by the panel members, and example minutes of the Academic Board, in which the validation of Foundation Production Arts is confirmed, dated October 2023. The Validation Tracker provides a structured summary in table form of dates of validation, whether a validation or revalidation, commendations, conditions (with confirmation when these were met) and recommendations that courses have received. The Validation Tracker is considered by the Academic Board and is the responsibility of the Higher Education Policy and Compliance Officer as part of their management of validation procedures. Course teams are given clear deadlines by the HE Policy and Compliance Officer using a Validation Process Tracker tool which is used to track deadlines and achievement of key milestones. Course teams are required to inform a panel chair of actions completed or in progress to meet any conditions by agreed dates. From reviewing the Validation Panel minutes, minutes of Academic Board, Validation Tracker and Validation Process Tracker template, the assessment team were satisfied that LEG has in place transparent and robust mechanisms which enable the effective monitoring of the progress of courses through the approval procedures, including completion of identified actions and eventual sign-off and ratification at the Academic Board.

144. The assessment team considered the role of the Academic Board in setting and maintaining academic standards, particularly through the validation and revalidation of programmes. The assessment team was assured by samples of minutes of the Academic Board and a copy of the Academic Board terms of reference that business cases and validation and review of courses, via presentation of the Validation Tracker, are given adequate consideration by the Academic Board with outcomes ratified as part of the final approval process. An example of the final stage of the process was evidenced through a copy of the minutes of the October 2023 Academic Board meeting, which covered ten re-validations and a new validation for

Foundation Degree Production Arts. The minutes provided details of the conditions for each programme and confirmation of all conditions being met and confirmed in writing to the programme team. In the view of the team, student representation on the Academic Board, via a students' union representative, provides an opportunity for further student input on matters relating to academic standards, including the approval of courses and changes to regulations and policy. Minutes of the Academic Board provided evidence of student representation, for example the assessment team noted that the students' union higher education representative was actively engaged in discussion regarding a proposal by the Dean of Higher Education to increase student involvement in programme validation.

145. The assessment team concluded that LEG's programme approval arrangements are robust and applied consistently, and ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with its own academic frameworks and regulations.

146. To determine whether credit and qualifications are awarded only where the achievement of relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated through assessment, and both the UK threshold standards and the academic standards of the relevant degree awarding body have been satisfied, the assessment team reviewed the higher education academic regulations and policies. These included the 'Assessment and Moderation Policy', 'Approval and Review of Programmes Policy' and 'Learning and Teaching Policy' that LEG set out provide a framework for its approach to assessment and the award of credit and qualifications. The assessment team also considered the 'Assessment and Moderation Handbook', which acts as a key resource outlining requirements, relevant guidance and templates for staff. These documents provide guidance on LEG's approach to assessment, marking and moderation and clarify that LEG's awards are granted based on the level and number of credits achieved. The documents also include guidance on the approach to marking and moderation to ensure consistency of approach across and within programme. It is the assessment team's view following this review, that these documents provide the necessary framework and guidance for staff to ensure academic standards in the approach to assessment and award of credit and qualifications.

147. LEG set out that course and module learning outcomes are informed by external reference points including subject benchmarks. Validation procedures scrutinise learning outcomes to ensure that they are appropriate in their coverage of required course content and level of study. Course validation requires mapping of modules against course learning outcomes to ensure coverage at course level. Module learning outcomes are mapped to assessment tasks, and to course learning outcomes. LEG also has in place a system where there is a requirement for a minimum of two opportunities for students to cover each learning outcome. For courses with multiple pathways there is an additional requirement to consider overall level and coherency of learning outcomes in validation documentation. The team reviewed evidence including course validation documentation, programme and module specifications and external examiner reports (see B2, paragraphs 131-136). Following this review, it was the assessment team's view that the approach to programme and module learning outcomes is sufficient to ensure the appropriateness and coverage of learning outcomes, and the examples of learning outcomes reviewed in course documentation are clear in their communication of the learning that students need to achieve to gain credit and ultimately their degree award.

148. The assessment team undertook a comprehensive review of assessment procedures through scrutiny of a sample of student work and internal moderation reports. The sample was drawn from across 11 subject areas at Level 4 to Level 6, covering at least one module at each level. The sample was chosen to offer an overall representation of the assessment procedures across the programmes and levels of study offered by LEG. The external examiner reports submitted by LEG – covering 12 courses across 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 – were also scrutinised with regard to external examiner feedback on assessment procedures. This was performed as a method of assessing whether the Assessment and Moderation Policy and procedures outlined in the Assessment and Moderation Handbook were closely and consistently followed in practice to determine whether the standards achieved in assessed work meet threshold academic standards as described in the FHEQ.

149. From this review, the assessment team were satisfied that assessment feedback is given against learning outcomes, providing clarity and transparency over achievement. The assessment team noted commendation of this approach in external examiner reports. In the sample of assessed student work, the assessment team were satisfied that student work graded as meeting the qualification descriptor outcomes set out in the FHEQ, essentially the threshold academic standards, were of required quality. The samples of assessed student work reviewed by the assessment team confirmed that marking and moderation closely and consistently follows the marking and moderation procedures in practice (see B3, paragraphs 203-204). The assessment team concluded that assessment procedures and practices at LEG ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where achievement of learning outcomes has been demonstrated and academic standards met.

150. LEG set out that it uses internal (within course/module teams) and external (external examiners) moderation to ensure appropriateness and coverage of learning outcomes in assessment. As noted in the introduction and background to the report, LEG offers some of its higher education programmes across a number of its member campuses. Cross-internal moderation is used where modules operate across campuses to ensure consistency in the approach. LEG set out that internal moderation is undertaken within programme teams, with the moderator being a member of staff who is not part of the module delivery team. External moderation involves scrutiny by the external examiner. Moderation documents and examples of peer feedback on assessment grading reviewed by the assessment team, including Microbiology and Biotechnology and Criminal Law modules, provide evidence of robust moderation processes being undertaken at LEG. This includes requirements for module leaders to respond to feedback received from the moderator and outline any actions taken. For example, the assessment team noted a moderator requesting a review of the volume of content that students are required to cover in a 1,500 word written assessment, and a module leader response on the nature and expectation of the content in the assessment. Overall, the assessment team found these procedures demonstrated the continued maintenance of academic standards over time.

151. To test further the robustness of arrangements for ensuring credit and qualifications are only awarded where the achievement of relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated, the assessment team considered the role of the Board of Examiners. LEG set out that the Board of Examiners is used to monitor the achievement of course learning outcomes. The board maintains oversight of overall module and programme performance, and outliers are required to be investigated by programme teams and outcomes communicated as part of the annual review cycle (see paragraph 153). Membership of the Board of Examiners includes subject

and award external examiners, members of the programme team and is chaired by the Dean of Higher Education (or nominee) as a method of ensuring consistency and fairness across courses. Course teams have a pre-exam board meeting which occurs prior to the main examination boards and is used to ensure that data is accurate and reliable. The Award Board chair and external examiners are required to sign a declaration following each meeting to confirm their agreement that academic standards have been met in relation to the awards conferred. Following a review of copies of the minutes of the Board of Examiners – including those from March 2023, June 2023 and September 2023 – the assessment team noted detailed consideration had been given to student grades and the award of credit, including any additional PSRB standards requirements. External examiners received a scheduled opportunity at the Board of Examiners to provide a commentary (where present) in addition to the report they submit annually.

152. The assessment team concluded from the review of evidence that credit and qualifications will be awarded only where the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit, and course outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment, and both the UK threshold standards and the academic standards of the relevant degree awarding body have been satisfied.

153. Academic standards at LEG are ensured through several lifecycle processes including validation procedures, and annual review procedures at programme, departmental, service area (for example, widening participation and outreach), and institution level. Programme approval at LEG follows a four-stage process which requires the involvement of internal and external stakeholders and several gateways that need to be passed to gain approval. Co-ordination of the validation process is the responsibility of the Higher Education Policy and Compliance Officer and recorded via a 'Validation Process Tracker'. This acts as a checklist and deadline and milestone monitoring tool for the validation procedure. Validation panels are chaired by the Dean of Higher Education (or a nominee). A set of templates and support through handbooks and training has been developed, including workshops on course approval, defining learning outcomes and utilising internal and external expertise. Having reviewed these documents, the assessment team were satisfied that they provide programme teams with necessary skills and understanding to design courses that meet UK threshold standards. This includes setting learning outcomes that are appropriate to the level of study and cover necessary subject learning, and integrating feedback from internal and external stakeholders when designing course content.

154. Programme approvals begin with the strategic planning stage, focusing on approval of the business case by the Academic Board. LEG set out that strategic planning approval falls under the remit of the Programme Managers meeting, although this will move to sit within the responsibilities of the new Validations and Approvals Committee. The assessment team reviewed examples of documentation from this first stage of validation, including those where initial approval was not granted, and further work was required prior to approval and progression to the next stage. The assessment team were satisfied that this stage of the process adequately considers the business case for programme development and serves as a suitable first stage in the validation and approval procedure. A timeline for the validation is put in place upon completion of this first business case stage, and programme teams begin work on required documentation. The second stage is the 'informal read' stage which involves an informal meeting between the programme team, the curriculum design team, and the Associate Dean of Higher Education, to review initial validation plans and draft

documentation. The critical read and review stage follows after consultation with stakeholders, including students, external examiners and employers. More complete validation documentation is produced which is subject to formal feedback from internal and external academics. It is the view of the assessment team that the second and third stage of the validation and approval procedure provides sufficient opportunity for internal and external scrutiny and input into course design, development and approval. The final stage is where formal approval is sought through a validation panel constituted of internal and external academics and employers. The Validation Process Tracker, in place since academic year 2021-22, monitors progress through each stage and associated outcomes and actions. The assessment team was provided with examples illustrating courses moving through the stages of the process. These included the critical read feedback form for Foundation Degree Production Arts, critical read meeting minutes, and examples of annotated read feedback on draft course documentation from March 2023. This includes feedback and suggested actions to be taken prior to consideration by the Validation Panel. Validation Panel minutes were provided, including for Foundation Degree Production Arts and Foundation Degree Beauty, Communications and Promotion. It is the assessment team's view that validation processes are robust, providing necessary levels of scrutiny of business case, course design and content and appropriate consultation prior to a course being approved.

155. Major modifications are considered annually at an annual approval event, and minor modifications are considered on two occasions throughout each academic year. External examiners feed into all of these processes, with evidence present in meeting minutes and modification documentation of consultation with external examiners. External examiners are asked to provide formal written confirmation of their approval of all proposed modifications, and the team observed this in practice in reviewed examples for a change to the assessment on a module on the MSc Biosciences in March 2022. The assessment team noted good practice in the involvement of external examiners in modification procedures that offers additional oversight to support LEG in maintaining academic standards.

156. Annual review is an evidence-based quality assurance process, undertaken by programme teams, which captures and reviews feedback and comments on all aspects of course content and delivery. Templates for these reviews require relevant stakeholders to interrogate data and respond with reflective narrative and actions. Student feedback and comment is captured through multiple different forums, including the National Student Survey, module evaluations and staff-student meetings. External examiners also provide commentary and feedback through the external examiner annual report which also asks for explicit comment on whether academic standards are being achieved and maintained. The Chief External Examiner Report provides further feedback on academic standards, and the team reviewed an example of this occurring in practice from March 2023. The examination boards also monitor individual module performance feeding into annual review processes and the assessment team noted examples of demonstrable change arising from monitoring and feedback procedures, such as changes to assessment on the LLB (Hons) Law in the 2022-23 academic year.

157. LEG set out that course teams are required to produce annual course reports, outlining their response to feedback and indicating how it has been utilised to inform enhancements to course content and delivery. Course teams must also maintain and populate an action plan detailing in-year and future developments to courses. Action plans are reviewed and signed off by Heads of Department throughout the academic year. An annual review data event is used as a forum for monitoring of courses and service areas and associated action plans.

Good practice is demonstrated of year-on-year impact from actions being taken to respond to identified feedback, specifically relating to academic support provided to students on essays, with intervention centring on additional weekly classes to develop reading and research skills and used to monitor student progress with assessments. This is evidenced by the minutes from the October 2023 annual review event, and examples of annual course reports from 2021-22 to 2023-24 for six courses – including Foundation Degree Acting for two consecutive years, Foundation Degree PE and Sport Coaching, Foundation Degree Biomedical Science.

158. The assessment team concluded that LEG's programme approval, monitoring and review arrangements are robust, applied consistently, and explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by LEG are being maintained.

159. The team considered whether consultation with relevant external and independent expertise is embedded into course approval and modification procedures at LEG, to establish and maintain threshold academic standards. The assessment team noted that external examiners play a crucial role in maintaining standards throughout the course lifecycle, from validation and approval, to modifications, and ongoing quality assurance. LEG set out that external academics are invited to input into course development within the critical review stage of the validation procedure. The assessment team reviewed examples of external input into the validation of three programmes – Foundation Degree Film and Screen Media (which received input from Screen Yorkshire), Foundation Degree Animal Management and Behaviour (which received feedback from Dogs Trust, Donkey Sanctuary and Flamingo Land), and Foundation Degree Healthcare Assistant Practitioner (which gathered feedback from several health sector professionals via a panel event). From the review of evidence, the assessment team concluded that LEG is effectively utilising consultation with external and independent expertise in the approval and modification of its awards.

160. As outlined in B2.1, paragraph 136, the team noted the role of external examiners as a critical source of external expertise utilised by LEG. The assessment team reviewed 12 annual external examiner reports and responses provided by LEG from academic years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. It is the view of the assessment team that the feedback on academic standards provided by external examiners was consistent and valuable, providing confirmation that appropriate standards had been set for qualifications and of the comparability of standards with other higher education providers. External examiner reports also confirmed the reliability of academic standards over time. The Chief External Examiner reports, which provide additional oversight of overall standards and consistency at LEG, offer further evidence that threshold standards are being met. For example, the March 2023 Chief External Examiner Report, which covers qualifications validated by LEG, includes feedback commending the consistent application of academic standards across courses and use of established quality assurance processes by LEG.

161. The assessment team concluded that LEG makes use of appropriate external and independent expertise in establishing, and then maintaining, threshold academic standards and comparability of standards with other providers of equivalent level qualifications.

Conclusions

162. The assessment team concluded following the review of evidence that LEG has clear and consistently applied mechanisms for setting and maintaining academic standards through

clearly articulated and applied course approval, periodic review, and qualification award procedures. The higher education qualifications designed and delivered by LEG correspond to the threshold academic standards and credit volumes specified within the FHEQ. Samples of student work confirmed that awards are only issued where achievement of learning outcomes has been demonstrated and academic standards have been satisfied.

163. The assessment team found the design, approval and review procedures at LEG to be appropriately robust, applied consistently, and subject to relevant scrutiny. It has demonstrated its ability to design and deliver courses and qualifications that meet the threshold academic standards described in the FHEQ.

164. Following the review of evidence relating to course approval, periodic review, and qualification award, the assessment team were satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that LEG makes use of appropriate external and independent expertise to establish and maintain, threshold academic standards. External and independent expertise, including external examiners and employers, is embedded within procedures at LEG, which ensures the comparability of academic standards are reliable over time and reasonably comparable to those set and achieved by other UK degree awarding bodies.

Criterion B3: Quality of the academic experience

Advice to the OfS

165. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion B3: Quality of the academic experience because it meets sub-criteria B3.1.

166. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows in summary that LEG designs its curriculum, learning, teaching, associated resources, assessment and feedback in a way that provides a high quality academic experience to all students. It also demonstrates consistent and robust quality assurance of the academic experience to ensure that its intentions are being met in practice.

167. This view is based on specific consideration of the evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

> **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

168. It is the assessment team's view that LEG meets criterion B3.1 as the review of evidence has demonstrated that it designs and delivers courses and qualifications that provide a high quality academic experience to all students from all backgrounds, including those studying via distance learning. Its learning opportunities are consistently and rigorously quality assured, and the processes for the design, development and approval of programmes are effective.

169. The assessments team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows that LEG meets the evidence requirements for B3.1 and any other relevant evidence requirements.

Reasoning

Design and approval of programmes

170. To consider whether LEG operates effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes, the assessment team completed a full review of LEG's programme approval procedures, which included samples of completed documentation from each stage of the process. Full details outlining LEG's programme design, development and approval process are set out in B2, paragraphs 141-143. In summary, the assessment team found the evidence to reflect a robust set of processes which provide sufficient oversight and guidance, including through accompanying procedure documentation and staff training, support and criticality through informal and formal review, transparency and accurate recording of conditions and recommendations, including through the Validation Process Tracker to ensure effective operation of the design, development and approval of programmes of study.

171. Following the review of evidence, the assessment team were satisfied that processes for the design, development and approval of programmes are operated effectively and, additionally, provide a transparent record of progress from early concept through to a validated programme.

172. To support programme design, development and approval procedures, LEG has in place relevant guidance and support for staff to provide sufficient clarity regarding their roles and responsibilities in these procedures. It is the assessment team's view that LEG has a comprehensive approach to staff support in programme design, development and approval. For example, LEG set out that an 'Approval, Review and Modification Handbook' supports teams, while templates and exemplars guide staff through the process and ensure requirements are met, including for example, with regards to consultation with students, external examiners and employers. This is supplemented by a training programme which covers the key elements of curriculum design and development, with workshops covering course approval, defining learning outcomes and utilising internal and external expertise. Following a review of evidence including the Approval, Review and Modification Handbook, programme proposal documentation, and course development training materials, the assessment team considered the validation procedures to have a key developmental component evident in the informal read stage. Examples included for the Foundation Degree Animal Management and Behaviour course, where the informal read stage prompted revisions to proposed assessment. The assessment team considered this to reflect good practice in the provision of guidance and support in these procedures through enabling staff to obtain feedback during the earlier stages of development and design and incorporate this into formal documentation in preparation for the final stages of validation.

173. The assessment team concluded that support and guidance for staff on programme design, development, and approval is effective in its purpose to support staff. Alongside the developmental nature of the validation procedure at LEG, this provides sufficient support for staff in the design, development and approval procedures.

174. The assessment team were satisfied that the responsibility for approving new programme proposals is clearly assigned, including the involvement of external expertise, where and when appropriate, and subsequent action is carefully monitored. Responsibilities at all stages of programme design, development and approval are clearly articulated in the Approval, Review and Modification Handbook. The review of validation documentation showed that, during the initial Strategic Planning Approval stage, all roles are clearly assigned and a timeline for validation is put in place. This follows approval of the business case by the Academic Board in this stage of the validation process, and is tracked using the Validation Process Tracker. The programme Approval, Review and Modification Handbook details the constituency of each panel, with stages two to four of the design, development and approval procedure incorporating external academics and employer input. The Validation Panel is chaired by the Dean of Higher Education (or nominee). It is the assessment team's view that the support and guidance provided for programme teams provides sufficient clarity of all roles and responsibilities offering a suitable platform for course design, development and approval. The Validation Process Tracker offers an effective mechanism for monitoring and recording progress through the approval process; the tracker, including the example reviewed for Foundation Degree Healthcare Assistant Practitioner, provides a transparent and effective mechanism for monitoring the completion of identified actions following approval (see paragraphs 153-154 for further details).

175. It is the assessment team's view, following the review of evidence, that roles and responsibilities in course design, development and approval are clearly articulated and assigned and sufficient monitoring of actions is in place at LEG.

176. To test whether the coherence of programmes with multiple elements or alternative pathways is secured and maintained at LEG, the assessment team reviewed examples of programme design, development and approval documentation, course specifications of programmes in operation, and documentation relating to annual review procedures. The assessment team noted that validation documentation requires mapping against subject benchmarks, the FHEQ, and the quality code. The assessment team additionally reviewed examples of mapping against HTQ for Foundation Degree Health Play Specialism, and in the team's view, these examples reviewed were found to be coherent and to meet external benchmarks. LEG set out that for programmes with multiple pathways there is an explicit requirement to consider overall level and coherency of learning outcomes in validation documentation. The assessment team noted that LEG operates modules that are shared across courses, and that it has in place a system wherein an overall module leader sits above programme-level module leads for these shared modules, to ensure necessary oversight of module performance and consistency across courses. As part of the validation procedure, it must be noted in course validation documentation where modules are shared, with an example observed by the assessment team of the shared module Skills for Academic Study in the validation documentation for Foundation Degree Early Years Care and Education. Annual reviews of shared modules are undertaken by the overall module leader, and the assessment team looked at examples of these reviews for several modules. This included Level 6 Research Methods, taught across three top-up programmes, where comparison of student grades across cohorts was noted by the assessment team: BA (Hons) Leadership and Management; BA (Hons) Travel and Tourism Management; and BA (Hons) Business, Enterprise and Management. The assessment team noted the small student numbers on several programme pathways at LEG and the potential for impact on student experience and resourcing where student numbers are small. However, in the view of the team, the sharing of common modules across pathways assures resourcing of these pathways remains feasible and offers students a better course experience, subject to effective continued monitoring and review of student experience on shared modules.

177. The assessment team concluded that the coherency of courses with multiple pathways is secured and maintained at LEG with adequate consideration and appropriate measures taken during course approval, operation and monitoring and review.

178. Learning support services were found by the assessment team to be effectively embedded in the programme planning and approval arrangements at LEG. The assessment team noted that the Learning Support Manager and a library representative, for example, are both included in membership of the Academic Board, which has responsibility for the approval of curriculum development plans and the validation and review of courses. Resourcing implications for student support – both centrally and at department level, for new and existing programmes – are monitored by the Group Director of Higher Education Quality and Standards who is also a member of Academic Board. Furthermore, consideration of student support needs is represented by the Student Support Manager and Group Director of Higher Education Quality and Standards through the committee and board structure, and monitored through the annual and mid-year review process for existing programmes and LEG's overall higher education provision. Heads of Department are asked to consider departmental student

support resource needs as part of their input into the first stage of validation procedures, and there is a requirement to outline support needs explicitly in validation documentation with this evident in validation and approval documentation reviewed by the assessment team (see B2, paragraph 143).

179. The assessment team concluded that LEG maintains close links between learning support services throughout programme planning and approval arrangements.

Learning and teaching

180. It is the assessment team's view that LEG articulates and implements a strategic approach to learning and teaching which is consistent with its stated academic objectives. LEG has in place an appropriate Learning and Teaching Policy which aligns with the Luminate Education Group Strategy and the UCLeeds Strategy. The Learning and Teaching Policy outlines a focus on student centred learning, developing relationships between staff and students, provision of high quality learning resources and environments, flexible approaches to learning, staff development and training, and innovative assessment and feedback. LEG set out that the objectives of the Learning and Teaching Policy are enacted through several mechanisms including the Teaching and Learning Committee at UCLeeds, which is responsible for promoting and evaluating initiatives designed to enhance learning, teaching and assessment, including identifying actions, disseminating innovation and best practice (as set out in its terms of reference). The assessment team reviewed evidence including minutes of the Teaching and Learning Committee which showed good alignment with the stated objectives of the Learning and Teaching Policy, including engagement in discussion and action planning to enhance the quality of assessment feedback. The assessment team also noted in the evidence reviewed that a five-point strategic plan has been implemented to address areas of concern, including declining student numbers. This is outlined in the Student Recruitment and Enrolment 2023-24 Report, which is underpinned by employer engagement and integration of links with employers into course content.

181. Course learning and teaching strategies are scrutinised within the validation procedures and stated on course specifications, with a requirement for an explicit communication of 'Key Learning and Teaching Strategy and Methods'. The assessment team noted examples where the course learning and teaching strategy as outlined in validation documentation is identical, for example in the course specifications for Foundation Degree Health Play Specialism and Foundation Degree Healthcare Assistant Practitioner. While this approach may enable articulation of learning and teaching strategy that is consistent with stated academic objectives, the assessment team felt that this uniform approach could result in the learning and teaching strategy not fully meeting the requirements of individual courses. However, the assessment team were satisfied in other examples reviewed, including for LLB (Hons) Law, that course specific requirements were being sufficiently considered. The assessment team would recommend further work in this area to ensure that all approved courses give due consideration to programme-specific needs relating to learning and teaching. Overall, it is the assessment team's view that the content of the strategy communicated is appropriate to the courses being approved.

182. The assessment team concluded that the group has in place a strategic approach to learning and teaching which is consistent with stated academic objectives and is appropriately embedded in approval procedures and course operation.

183. Following a review of evidence, the assessment team concluded that LEG maintains physical, virtual and social learning environments that are safe, accessible and reliable for every student, promoting dignity, courtesy and respect in their use. LEG set out that policies relating to learning environments are governed at group level, and cover safety, accessibility and reliability of learning environments, including around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), health and safety, fire safety and data protection. The assessment team noted evidence of regular consideration and amendment of policies in the policy documentation, which stated last reviewed and next review dates. Budgets and resources are managed through a business planning model to ensure that budget required is secured to match resource needs.

184. LEG has a property strategy which governs the investment in the campus, including a new campus focused on higher education delivery with planned completion in July 2025. The group noted that the UCLeeds leadership team had been actively involved in the planning of the new campus, including the configuration of teaching and learning and social spaces, to ensure it meets the needs of students and staff. LEG set out that reviews are conducted of existing environments to ensure that they continue to meet student needs, and student voice procedures feed into these review processes, with examples given including the setting up of a library in the University Centre and the creation of individual study spaces in response to identified need. The assessment team also noted a good practice example of developments in the physical learning environment: a Wellbeing Walkway took place in March 2023 around the University Centre, with the design informed by a student project instigated on the Foundation Degree Health and Wellbeing course. The assessment team additionally noted that LEG has been successful in securing OfS capital funding and Higher Technical Education Skills Injection Funds to improve learning and teaching resources and spaces. These include the creation of specialist teaching spaces, such as a sensory room, sports performance lab, robotics equipment, and chemistry analytical machines, to meet the need of specific programmes of study. Validation procedures also include the requirement to consider the need for any specialist equipment including that which may necessitate a specialist teaching space. Further investment is being made, including a business start-up hub. It is the assessment team's view that LEG has in place relevant policies, guidance and support for staff and students, including around EDI, to ensure that learning environments are safe, accessible and reliable for every student and promote dignity, courtesy and respect.

185. LEG's dedicated UCLeeds website contains relevant information for prospective and current higher education students including policies, procedures, guides and programme information including course specifications. The assessment team reviewed the website and concluded that it provided sufficient information for prospective and current students in an, overall, accessible format. LEG is a Google Educator, reflecting that it has been certified by Google as having successfully implemented the Google Suite of Education. However, LEG set out that, due to limitations in the use of Google suite for its virtual learning environment (VLE), investment has been made into an alternative VLE platform, Anthology (Blackboard), which was implemented from September 2023 and accompanied by a training programme for staff. The assessment team noted the use of a VLE system that is well embedded across the higher education sector and reviewed documentation relating to the VLE. This included the implementation plan, which provided evidence of sufficient consideration of training for staff, and a standards checklist which provides appropriate guidance to staff on required content and use of the VLE. The assessment team noted the good practice demonstrated through students being provided with access to a laptop at the commencement of their studies and

being given digital skills training to ensure the VLE is accessible to all students. LEG set out that digital skills development is further integrated into induction, incorporating the use of e-resources associated with the library and utilisation of the VLE to support learning. A support hub is additionally in place to provide support to students. Policies around IT use provide a basis for expectations around behaviours in virtual learning environments, promoting dignity, courtesy and respect in their use.

186. The assessment team concluded that LEG effectively maintains physical, virtual and social learning environments that are safe, accessible and reliable for every student, promoting dignity, courtesy and respect in their use.

187. Although distance learning is not a central feature of LEG's higher education offer, the assessment team considered whether robust arrangements exist for ensuring that the learning opportunities provided to those of its students who may be studying at a distance from the organisation are effective. The assessment team noted that LEG launched its first blended delivery course, Foundation Degree Health Play Specialism, which was designed in partnership with Great Ormond Street Hospital. The assessment team also noted evidence provided from Great Ormond Street Hospital regarding how LEG positively engaged in the development of the course, including the decision to utilise a block learning delivery mode to facilitate student attendance of in-person sessions alongside external commitments, which LEG outlined was valued by students. The assessment team identified that student engagement mechanisms outlined by LEG, such as assigning a personal tutor to each student and programme teams tracking student progress, also offer an effective way of monitoring engagement for students studying on campus and at a distance. Following the review of this evidence, the assessment team were satisfied that the mechanisms in place offer robust arrangements for ensuring that the learning opportunities provided to those of its students who may be studying at a distance from the provider, including on a temporary basis, are effective.

188. As noted in paragraph 185, the assessment team reviewed evidence of effective mechanisms for students to engage in learning and teaching at a distance. This included access to a VLE and all students being provided with a Chromebook laptop computer when they commence their studies, to ensure they can access learning regardless of their individual financial circumstances. The assessment team also noted that students are given a digital skills induction and have access to a support hub. The team considered that this offered an appropriate mechanism for providing students with necessary skills and resources to remain connected to LEG at distance.

189. The assessment team concluded that LEG offers robust arrangements for ensuring that the learning opportunities provided to those of its students who may be studying at a distance from the organisation are effective.

190. To test whether every student is enabled to monitor their progress and further their academic development, the assessment team reviewed evidence relating to tutorials, opportunities and mechanisms for monitoring progress and self-reflection, and access to opportunities to further academic development. The assessment team noted that a tutorial programme is used as the basis for students to monitor their progress on their course and self-reflect. The group set out that tutorials are timetabled into the course, and the tutorial programme includes activities such as reviewing assessment feedback and feed forward with assigned tutors. The

assessment team noted good practice in the use of grade calculators by the group to enable students to better engage with their progress and monitor their current situation. The grade calculator is an interactive form into which students can enter their achieved grades and see what grade(s) would be required in remaining assessments to achieve overall differing levels of attainment. Alongside the tutorial system, the higher education student support team offers a suite of study skills, one-to-one support, access to resources via the University Centre (UC) Hub, and broader advice. These can all be accessed via the online student hub, which the assessment team felt offered an appropriate and inclusive mechanism of engagement with these services. The assessment team noted evidence of demonstrable impact of interventions to support improvements in attainment from student support, including support helping students to increase grade-point averages and secure postgraduate study. For example, the team reviewed evidence of a two per cent increase in proportions of students achieving first class and 2:1 awards on the Foundation Creative Arts course, following implementation of enhanced monitoring of student progress using grade calculators and linked intervention from personal tutors and course teams to increase student engagement.

191. The assessment team concluded that LEG has in place appropriate mechanisms for students to monitor their progress and further their academic development, structured around a tutorial programme and support services offered by the higher education student support team.

Assessment

192. To test whether LEG operates valid and reliable processes of assessment, the assessment team considered evidence including procedure and guidance documentation such as LEG's Higher Education Assessment and Moderation Handbook and staff training materials. The team also reviewed nine course specifications, module specifications and handbooks for six modules, assessment briefs, samples of student work and feedback provided by staff covering 11 courses from Foundation level to Level 6 (see B2, paragraphs 132 and 148 for further sample details). The assessment team reviewed this evidence with specific focus on whether the assessment processes enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought. Following its review of the evidence, the assessment team noted that assessment documentation is clear and transparent and assessment strategies are informed by industry practice, with the aim to provide assessments that are authentic to future employment in that subject area. The team formed the view that assessment processes are valid and reliable.

193. The assessment team observed that learning outcomes are stated in all course and module specifications, and staff are supported to understand how to develop learning outcomes for new and existing programmes through the DELTAR programme. There is a focus on the use of appropriate language to effectively communicate learning outcomes, which the assessment identified through its review of evidence including revisions made to the PGCE programme specification during validation. LEG's Higher Education Assessment and Moderation Handbook outlines assessment requirements for staff, including guidance on how to ensure links between learning outcomes and individual assessments and that all module learning outcomes are assessed. Module learning outcomes are mapped to assessment tasks, and to course learning outcomes. Assessment feedback is provided specifically against learning outcomes, and the assessment team was satisfied in the example student work reviewed that feedback was sufficiently clear in its articulation of whether and how students had demonstrated their achievement of learning outcomes. Any changes to assessment and

moderation processes are incorporated into relevant documentation and accompanied by training for staff.

194. The assessment team reviewed evidence of the procedures for recognition of prior learning and was satisfied that the procedures in place at LEG are sufficient. The Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and procedure is available on the UCLeeds website, covering credited and experiential learning. The process requires a proposal form to be completed in cases of experiential learning. Two examples were reviewed by the assessment team, in both cases reflecting requests for recognition of prior learning at Level 4 to enable direct entry into Level 5. The assessment team were satisfied that these examples provided evidence of Recognition of Prior Learning Policy and procedures enabling students to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes for credit or qualification.

195. The assessment team concluded that assessment procedures at LEG are valid and reliable and enable students to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

196. The assessment team's review of whether staff and students engage in dialogue to promote a shared understanding of the basis on which academic judgements are made consisted of a full review of course documentation, assessment briefs, and student feedback via the National Student Survey. The assessment team noted the use of the programme handbook, based on a common template, as a baseline for communications outlining programme learning outcomes, programme structure, links to academic regulations and other essential information for students. LEG set out that students receive an Academic Regulations talk prior to start of summative assessments. In addition to the programme handbook, students are provided with module specifications at the beginning of each module which outline module content and learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are outlined in every assessment with grading performed against learning outcomes. Students are additionally encouraged to submit drafts of assessments for feedback. The assessment team formed the view that these mechanisms are sufficient in ensuring a shared understanding of the basis on which academic judgements are made.

197. A specific focus of LEG's Higher Education Teaching and Learning Committee is in responding to student feedback including through trial interventions. Student voice and feedback is facilitated through multiple mechanisms including personal tutoring, student representatives, and surveys including the National Student Survey (NSS). A review of student feedback from the NSS by the assessment team, suggests that overall students are satisfied with the quality of their learning experience at LEG. A key indicator of the quality of dialogue between staff and students is feedback on student voice. Overall, the NSS feedback on student voice is positive, with 82 per cent of students providing positive responses on student voice questions in 2022-23, although the assessment team noted variations over the four-year period of data reviewed. Student responses to questions on the quality of assessments and feedback offer further insight into dialogue between staff and students. Evidence from the National Student Survey confirms higher than benchmark results, with 92 per cent student satisfaction in 2022-23. Course and module-level feedback data is additionally collected at UCLeeds via student surveys and feeds into annual review procedures at course level. This is alongside other key indicators of course performance, evident in course annual reviews that were reviewed by the assessment team, including for Foundation Degree Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences. The assessment team did

note, however, some gaps in consistency and that some annual reviews did not include reflection on course and module survey results. Overall, example module survey data reviewed by the assessment team (dated November 2023) was found to be broadly in line with NSS data.

198. In conclusion, the assessment team were satisfied that LEG has appropriate mechanisms in place to promote effective dialogue between staff and students of the basis on which academic judgements are made.

199. To test whether students are provided with opportunities to develop an understanding of, and the necessary skills to demonstrate, good academic practice, the assessment team reviewed all evidence relating to LEG's approaches to academic practice. The team reviewed the Academic Misconduct Policy, Academic Misconduct Procedure, 'Student Guide to Avoiding Academic Misconduct' and LEG's academic practice procedures, including an example induction schedule for 2023-24. The 'Student Guide to Avoiding Academic Misconduct' supports students to engage in good academic practice as it provides relevant information and understanding of expectations and what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable academic practice. The team noted that course induction processes contain specific activities on academic integrity and use of the Turnitin academic integrity and plagiarism detection tool to support the development of student understanding. Learning styles and study skills are incorporated into the induction checklist, including an introduction to issues associated with academic malpractice. Academic skills development is cited by LEG as an essential component of Level 4 with all courses possessing a distinctive module, for example Skills for Academic Study, which is re-enforced throughout the wider course. Academic skills support is provided through the higher education student support team and the library, who offer drop-in sessions to complement skills development. Students are provided with training on Turnitin, and formative assessments, which are informal and not included in overall module grade calculations, are used to aid skill development and self-reflection on academic practice. This supports students in completion of the summative assessments used to evaluate module performance and determine module grade, to aid skill development and self-reflection on academic practice. LEG operates a system in which work is submitted electronically, where possible, to enable originality checking via Turnitin. Examples of graded student work reviewed by the assessment team provide evidence of feedback being given directly in reference to Turnitin reports and academic practice. The assessment team found evidence of actions being identified and implemented at course level to address skills concerns and support students in dealing with feedback. For example, for the Foundation Business, Enterprise and Management course, in the Award Committee minutes dated December 2021, the assessment team noted reference to the introduction of acting on feedback sessions for students. The assessment team reviewed two examples of academic misconduct via meeting minutes dated November 2023 and February 2024, which included details of deliberations, outcomes and feedback to the student. Following this review, the assessment team were satisfied that the procedures for academic misconduct are appropriately designed and applied.

200. The assessment team concluded that students are provided with suitable opportunities to develop an understanding of, and the necessary skills to demonstrate, good academic practice.

201. The assessment team reviewed processes at LEG, for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to unacceptable academic practice including the Academic Misconduct Policy, Academic Misconduct Procedure and 'Student Guide to Avoiding Academic Misconduct'. Following this review, the assessment team was satisfied that LEG has appropriate processes in place to mitigate unacceptable academic practice. LEG is a signatory to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education, which LEG views as a commitment to work with staff and students to promote academic integrity and take action against cases of academic misconduct. LEG has an Academic Misconduct Policy and operates an Academic Misconduct Procedure that articulates how misconduct is handled including investigation and application of penalties. In the 2022-23 academic year, it is noted that two per cent of students (22 in total) were invited to informal academic misconduct discussions. The assessment team felt that this was an acceptable number of cases that did not indicate an overall concern with academic misconduct. The assessment team reviewed three examples of academic misconduct meeting minutes, dated April 2023, November 2023 and February 2024, including details of deliberations, outcomes and feedback provided to the student; membership of the Misconduct Panel constituted the Associate Dean of Higher Education as Chair, two academic staff and a secretary. The minutes provide insight into how cases are handled: the Chair introduced the meeting and outlined the process, and the student and staff presented their case, before discussions and deliberations by the Misconduct Panel (without the student present), and finally the outcome was communicated to the student. The examples showed an appropriate procedure to be in place that provides sufficient opportunity for consideration of each individual student case. The assessment team felt that the process for academic misconduct was handled in line with other higher education providers. The assessment team additionally noted specific reference in policies to third party production of assessments and of the use of generative AI, which the assessment team felt offered evidence of good practice in attempts by LEG to keep up with the changing external environment in higher education.

202. The assessment team concluded that LEG has in place appropriate procedures for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to unacceptable academic practice.

203. To ascertain whether processes for marking assessments and for moderating marks are clearly articulated and consistently operated by those involved in the assessment process, the assessment team reviewed assessment and moderation policy, procedures and examples of student work across 11 courses and covering Foundation level to Level 6. The assessment team noted that LEG has an Assessment and Moderation Policy in place, and new staff receive training so that they understand the procedures and expectations around marking and moderation. LEG set out that the staff CPD programme, DELTAR, has a dedicated module on assessment marking and moderation. Prior to release, assessments are subject to internal and external moderation; the former is a peer review procedure involving members of the course team and the latter is undertaken by external examiners.

204. The assessment team reviewed examples of moderation of course materials, including module handbooks that included review of assessment brief and assessment criteria (for example, on the module Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences). First marking is undertaken by the module team. Moderation of student work is undertaken internally by other members of the course team, and with external scrutiny offered by external examiners. The assessment team reviewed examples of moderated student work including for the modules Microbiology and Biotechnology and Criminal Law (see section B2 for more details of

sampling of course and module documentation used by the assessment team). Following the review of example moderation documentation, the assessment team was satisfied that procedures for marking assessments and moderating marks are appropriately robust, and that feedback from internal and external moderators is taken into account and responded to by module teams. The requirements of moderation processes are specified in the Assessment and Moderation Handbook.

205. Student feedback from the NSS confirms higher than benchmark satisfaction with assessment and feedback among higher education students at LEG (92 per cent against the benchmark of 89 per cent). The assessment team did note that student feedback at course level via NSS highlights some concerns commonly found across the higher education sector, including around assessment types, and quality, quantity and clarity of feedback. In addition, the assessment team noted some differences in approaches to the provision of feedback, including evidence of some gaps in consistency between examples of feedback on student work, and provision of feed forward commentary to focus on how the student could improve future assessments. An example is the sample of student work reviewed from the Foundation Degree Graphic Design and Illustration (see paragraph 270). However, it is the view of the assessment team that, overall, there is sufficient evidence of feedback being given against learning outcomes and developmental feedback, and feed forward in the examples of student work reviewed. The assessment team felt, overall, that processes for marking and moderation of assessment are appropriate and effective in their application.

206. The assessment team concluded that processes for marking assessments and for moderating marks are clearly articulated and consistently operated by those involved in the assessment process.

External examining

207. Following a review of external examining procedures and supporting evidence, it is the assessment team's view that LEG makes scrupulous use of external examiners including in the moderation of assessment tasks and student assessed work. LEG set out that external examiner nominations are proposed by course teams, and the Registrar conducts a review of all proposals submitted to ensure expertise and qualifications of proposed examiners are appropriate. A further layer of scrutiny is provided by the Academic Board. Guidance for the appointment of external examiners is aligned to the QAA Quality Code, including ensuring that any potential issues of conflict of interest through reciprocal arrangements are avoided. Once approved, new external examiners receive online training and are provided with a group-specific External Examiner Handbook and External Examiner Guide to support them in their role. Mentoring support is additionally provided for external examiners with no prior experience. The assessment team reviewed the external examiner support documentation outlined and were satisfied that it clearly articulates the role of the external examiner including responsibilities and expectations. External examiners' responsibilities include moderating assessment briefs, assessed work, and advice and guidance including input into course validation procedures. External examiners are provided with access to all student work so that they can determine the sample for review which, in the team's view, would be likely to ensure openness and fairness in external sampling.

208. The assessment team completed a review of 12 annual external examiner reports and responses covering academic years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. Following this review,

the assessment team was satisfied that LEG gives full and serious consideration to the comments and recommendations contained in external examiners' reports and provides external examiners with a considered and timely response to their comments and recommendations. LEG set out that course teams are required to produce a written response to external examiner reports and incorporate suggested actions into annual review processes. An overview of external examiner reports is produced as part of the Higher Education Annual Review, with examples reviewed by the assessment team including in the 2022-23 Annual Review. The assessment team noted examples illustrating institution-wide action in the form of training in response to concerns around student feedback arising from external examiner reports in 2019-20. Following the intervention, LEG noted 21 out of 22 external examiner reports in academic year 2021-22 included positive comments on feedback practice. The assessment team noted reference being made in external examiner reports, for example for Foundation Physical Education and Sports Coaching dated July 2022, that feedback from previous years had been responded to and actions taken, evidencing an ongoing dialogue between course teams and external examiners.

209. The assessment team concluded that external expertise from external examiners is utilised appropriately in the moderation of assessment tasks and student assessed work, and that LEG gives full and serious consideration to the comments and recommendations contained in external examiners' reports and provides external examiners with a considered and timely response to their comments and recommendations.

Academic appeals and student complaints

210. The assessment team reviewed the procedures and evidence relating to academic appeals and student complaints. The assessment team found that LEG has effective procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of the academic experience, and that these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement. LEG set out that it has Academic Appeals and Complaints policies in place informed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) Good Practice Framework, and they are reviewed every two years. The assessment team noted that the policies are accompanied by guides communicated via the UCLeeds website, student VLE and student handbook to ensure accessibility and transparency of procedures in place. The assessment team formed the view that the content of the Academic Appeals and Complaints policies and accompanying guidance were fair and accessible both in their communication of policy and procedure and ease of access via the UCLeeds website. The assessment team also noted evidence of data on appeals and complaints being considered by Academic Board as part of the Higher Education Annual Review.

211. The assessment team's review of evidence confirmed that appropriate action is taken following an academic appeal or student complaint. The assessment team was provided with details of appeals and complaints received in 2020-21 (eight in total), 2021-22 (14 in total) and 2022-23 (six in total). The assessment team noted that one complaint had been referred to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, but not upheld. All other complaints had been resolved through internal procedures. The assessment team felt the handling of these cases to be in line with other higher education providers, both in number of cases relative to overall student numbers and outcomes. The assessment team were satisfied following this review that appropriate action is being taken following an academic appeal or student complaint.

212. The assessment team concluded that academic appeals and student complaints at LEG are covered by appropriate procedures that are fair, accessible and timely. Appropriate action is taken following an appeal or complaint through procedures that are transparent and robust.

Conclusions

213. Following the review of evidence the assessment team concluded that LEG demonstrated that it is 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.

214. The assessment team found that procedures for design, development and approval of courses are appropriately robust and accountable. Staff are provided with necessary guidance on support, and all responsibilities are clearly assigned with adequate input of external expertise. The assessment team was satisfied that courses are coherent and learning support services have appropriate involvement throughout stages of course design and approval.

215. Evidence on learning and teaching confirmed the presence of a strategic approach to learning and teaching. LEG maintains physical, virtual and social learning environments that are safe, accessible and reliable for all students. Although distance learning is not a central feature of the offer at LEG, the assessment team found that it has in place suitable arrangements to ensure learning opportunities for those studying at distance. Every student is also able to monitor their progress and academic development through tutorial programmes and other mechanisms in place.

216. Assessment processes at LEG were found to be valid and reliable, including recognition for prior learning. Assessments enabled students to demonstrate their achievement of intended learning outcomes. The assessment team were satisfied that students and staff engage in dialogue regarding academic judgements, students are provided with sufficient opportunities to develop an understanding of, and demonstrate, good academic practice. LEG has in place mechanisms to prevent, identify, investigate and respond to academic malpractice. Processes for marking and moderation are clearly articulated and consistently applied.

217. LEG makes use of external expertise provided by external examiners including in the setting and moderation of assessments. The assessment team found that LEG has in place appropriate mechanisms to give full and serious consideration and response to external examiner comments and recommendations.

218. The assessment team was satisfied that LEG has effective procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints which are fair, accessible and timely, and was able to demonstrate appropriate actions being taken following an appeal or complaint.

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

219. It is the assessment team's view that LEG meets criterion C1: The role of the academic and professional staff because it meets criteria C1.1.

220. The assessments team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows in summary that LEG assures itself it has appropriate numbers of staff to teach its students. The assessment team concluded that staff involved in teaching and learning or supporting learning, and in the assessment of student work, are appropriately qualified, supported and developed to the levels and subjects of the qualifications awarded.

221. This view is based on specific consideration of the evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

> **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

222. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion C1.1 because it has appropriate numbers of staff to teach its students. Staff involved in teaching and learning or supporting learning, and in the assessment of student work, is appropriately qualified, supported and developed to the levels and subjects of the qualifications awarded.

223. The assessments team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows that LEG met the evidence requirements for C1 and any other relevant evidence requirements.

Reasoning

224. To test that relevant learning, teaching and assessment practices are informed by reflection, evaluation of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship, the assessment team considered a range of evidence covering the teaching observation process, staff development programme and performance management review process.

225. LEG uses the UCLeeds Research and Scholarly Activity Framework to guide higher education staff activity aligned to 'teaching, learning and assessment', 'staff research and development', 'knowledge exchange', 'externality', 'student research' and 'monitoring and evaluation'. Staff development needs are identified through using the Research and Scholarly Activity Framework, performance management reviews, teaching observations and the programme approval process.

226. The assessment team reviewed a sample of eight individual Research Activity Plans. The plans describe details of proposed research activity with a rationale aligning to the Research and Scholarly Activity Framework. Of the samples provided, three aligned to the teaching, learning and assessment strand. Proposed research projects, initiated by staff reflection, included 'Using Feedback', 'Personalised Individual Progress Reviews' and 'Consider whether strict attendance policies are effective in HE'.

227. Since 2022, LEG has operated its higher education 'learning through observation' (LTO) scheme which replaced the existing peer observation process for staff who teach on higher education programmes. The aim of the scheme is 'to enable staff to enhance their own teaching through sharing their practice with colleagues' and feed into individual staff Research Activity Plans to guide the development of pedagogic knowledge and practice. Observations are scheduled to take place over a two-week period and are conducted by a team of trained observers, including Heads/Deputy Heads of Department and Programme Managers. Observations are mandatory for staff who teach exclusively on higher education programmes and all staff are required to participate in the process at least once per year.

228. The assessment team reviewed two completed examples of the LTO form from the 2022-23 academic year which captured comments from the observers on key areas as set out in the observation proforma. These included a general summary of learning, teaching and assessment, the structure of the lesson to ensure students meet the stated learning outcomes, pace and interaction, currency, accuracy and relevance of the content for the students and programme level, appropriateness of the learning environment, the quality of resources and identification of best practice. There is also an opportunity for an observation focus to be agreed beforehand, and the assessment team noted that one of the examples had included a specific focus on the relevance of the class content to the relevant industry's context. Once an observation has been completed, the staff member who has been observed is asked to identify one area for development and any support required to fulfil the action via completion of an LTO action plan. These are monitored by the Programme Manager and collated by the Head of Research and Learning Development who produces an annual LTO report.

229. The assessment team noted from the 2022-23 LTO report that, in addition to the 'multidisciplinary approach' to the observation process, the Creative Arts department piloted a peer observation process to enable more teaching staff to act as observers and observe subjects that were more closely related to their own. The pilot received positive feedback, including around opportunities to share resources and collaborate with other teaching staff to support practice. This was further demonstrated in one of the completed LTO forms which observed the use of a piece of software to help demonstrate colour theory and was identified as something that could be beneficial to the observer's own subject area. LEG plans to roll the peer observation process out to the wider higher education curriculum from the 2023-24 academic year.

230. The most recent annual LTO report cited an overall observation completion rate of 94 per cent in 2022-23, but LEG acknowledged that, while completion of the observations was high, this was not reflected in the completion rate of individual action plans which was 66 per cent overall. The assessment team identified that the lack of completed individual action plans may indicate that staff are not able to reflect fully on their observation. However, the team

was reassured that the report set out an action to increase tracking and scrutiny of individual actions plans to raise the completion rate for the 2023-24 academic year.

231. The report identified areas of best practice which had been recorded by observers, including subject and industry knowledge, a variety and appropriate use of teaching and learning practices. It also set out four common areas in which teaching staff would like more support and development, including ways to increase student contributions and questioning techniques and utilising a wider range of technology to engage students in their area of study. In response, the report noted an action to develop and run sessions covering the key areas through LEG's DELTAR CPD programme, to be delivered in June 2023. The assessment team found that this was reflected in the copies of DELTAR resources that they reviewed, which aimed to familiarise teaching staff with new technologies to enhance learning in the context of their subject areas and explore effective questioning to encourage learning and student engagement. The assessment team also identified positive feedback for the sessions, with 85 per cent of staff having rated the sessions as 'excellent' and 15 per cent as 'very good', captured at the subsequent Academic Board meeting in July 2023.

232. The assessment team noted that staff are engaged with appropriate scholarly activity identified through the programme approval and performance management review processes. The assessment team saw evidence of the CPD programme for higher education practitioners, as run through DELTAR, which provides a range of appropriate modules and resources to inform learning, teaching and assessment practices. These include technology in the classroom, designing and planning learning activities, teaching and supporting learning, assessment and feedback, developing effective learning environments and approaches. The programme also includes modules to engage staff in considering the ways in which they can maintain and develop discipline-specific professional practice and pedagogy, incorporating research and scholarship, and evaluate their own practice. The assessment team reviewed evidence of staff engagement in the DELTAR programme for the 2022-23 academic year, which LEG uses to track completion dates per module for each member of staff. It demonstrated high levels of completion for 2022-23 across the areas outlined above. Similarly, the Academic Board minutes from October 2023 identified staff engagement with the DELTAR programme in 2021-22 as 88 per cent.

233. The annual LEG Unlocking Potential Conference and the LEG Higher Education Festival of Scholarly Activity and Research provide two internal opportunities for staff to engage with development sessions and disseminate their own research. The assessment team reviewed evidence of educational scholarship within the LEG Unlocking Potential Conference, which included sessions on gamification of assessment, approaches to learning, the use of virtual reality as a teaching tool in sport, designing and facilitating authentic assessment, and exploring inclusivity within practice. Similarly, the assessment team reviewed the UCLeeds Higher Education Research Festival Programme 2023 and noted sharing of good practice relating to personalising tutorials, employer engagement and enhancing student feedback literacy, in addition to subject-specific scholarship. The Research and Learning Development report to Academic Board in July 2022 and July 2023 noted high levels of staff engagement and positive staff feedback, with feedback from attendees used to inform the future design of the event.

234. The assessment team considered evidence of staff qualifications captured through the 'UCLeeds staff qualifications' document and found that LEG has high levels of engagement

with professional practice for higher education teaching and support staff, including evidence of engagement with the Advance HE fellowship scheme and membership of the Society for Education and Training. Subject-specific scholarship is also evidenced in the same document via records of subject society membership, research or scholarly projects, conference presentations, secondments to associated industry or profession, curriculum development, engagement with other higher education providers, consultancy, creative outputs and up-to-date professional practice. The Research and Scholarly Activity Log documents specific continuous professional development outputs, which include professional practice and subject-specific experience, for example conference papers, industry photoshoots, curatorial projects, exhibitions, costume and make-up design credits, among others.

235. The assessment team concluded that LEG has relevant learning, teaching and assessment practices that are informed by reflection, evaluation of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship.

236. To determine whether staff involved in teaching or supporting student learning, and in the assessment of student work, have academic and (where applicable) professional expertise, the assessment team reviewed a summary of staff qualifications. The document provides an overview of staff qualifications for teaching and support staff across each department and covers: teaching qualification; other relevant academic qualifications; level of qualification compared with level of teaching; engagement with pedagogic development of discipline; research outputs; professional practice experience; Advance HE recognition; engagement with other higher education providers (such as external examining); and staff development activity.

237. The assessment team noted that the majority of teaching staff hold a bachelors' degree or above, which the assessment team considers would be appropriate for LEG to award its own bachelors' DAPs. Of the four curriculum staff members whose highest level of qualification is a foundation degree, three hold a teaching qualification. LEG also provides support and opportunities for staff to gain additional qualifications, and the assessment team found that 55 per cent of staff hold or are working towards a masters' degree, with a further 14 per cent working towards PhDs.

238. The assessment team viewed an example job description and person specification for a higher education lecturer. This confirmed that LEG requires all staff to hold a Level 5 teaching qualification, a relevant first degree or equivalent in the subject area, English and maths at Level 2 or above and relevant up-to-date subject knowledge. The assessment team also noted that the job description is adapted to the requirements of the department the role is being recruited to.

239. The assessment team considered both academic and professional expertise of the staff involved in teaching or supporting student learning, noting that the curriculum offer within LEG's portfolio is, in the main, vocationally led. The assessment team reviewed evidence of expertise through a sample of programme validation documentation covering three different programmes validated or revalidated by LEG since gaining Foundation DAPs: Foundation Degree Assistant Practitioner (Healthcare), Foundation Degree Film and Foundation Degree Animal Management and Behaviour. The programme validation documents include a section on 'research and scholarly activity' which confirm that staff on these programmes are adequately trained to deliver the proposed qualification. Short biographies of the curriculum

staff members also confirmed their subject specialism and professional experience is suitable and relevant. For example, a member of teaching staff on Foundation Degree Film has a masters' degree, specialises in script development, producing and broadcasting, and has ten years' experience as a filmmaker, developing original independent films for traditional cinema and immersive video forms.

240. Furthermore, the Research and Scholarly Activity Log documents continuous professional development and subject-specific training for the Creative Arts, Sport and Health curriculum staff for the 2022-23 academic year. The log includes examples of staff members attending conferences and specialist training sessions which the assessment team identified as appropriate to support the development of academic and/or professional expertise aligned to their subject discipline and teaching practice.

241. The assessment team concluded that all staff at LEG involved in teaching or supporting student learning, and in the assessment of student work, have academic or professional expertise.

242. The assessment team noted active engagement of curriculum staff with the pedagogic development of their discipline knowledge. The assessment team's review of evidence showed that the Head of Research and Learning Development is central to staff achieving active engagement with the pedagogic development of their discipline knowledge at LEG. This role was created in 2022 as an adjustment to the previous Research Co-ordinator role, in acknowledgment of the strategic importance of embedding pedagogic development of discipline knowledge. The assessment team found that the Head of Research and Learning Development leads on all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment improvement and enhancement and provides leadership to all curriculum delivery staff. This role promotes scholarship and pedagogic opportunities and support. The role line-manages the Bids and Project Co-ordinator who seeks funding opportunities to support research projects.

243. The Research and Scholarly Activity Framework promotes and encourages active engagement with pedagogic and discipline knowledge. During the performance review process, staff consider their discipline and professional knowledge and identify development needs associated with this. The Research Committee offers a forum where academics can come together to discuss matters relating to research and ethics.

244. The assessment team noted that the annual LEG Unlocking Potential Conference and the LEG Higher Education Festival of Scholarly Activity and Research provides two internal forums for staff to disseminate their practice. Examples were provided of staff engaging with these events, including examples of presentations. There is evidence of LEG's higher education staff presenting nationally in the Research and Scholarly Activity Log, and staff have also presented and attended conferences internationally. The assessment team also notes examples of funding awards from the Luminate Innovation Fund for scholarly activity which enables support for small research projects. Examples include a £15,000 project to support students into employment in the creative industries, £5,000 for peer support buddies and £1,000 to aid feedback via innovative technology among others.

245. The assessment team found that validation reports noted areas of commendation. For example, BSc (Hons) Concept Art (Top up) validation report recognised the importance of research and the encouragement for students to work with staff on research. An example of

this is detailed in UCLeeds Annual Research Festival in 2023 where 11 students contributed. One student presented at the LEG Unlocking Potential Conference in 2022.

246. The assessment team concluded that staff have active engagement with the pedagogic development of their discipline knowledge.

247. The assessment team reviewed evidence, including the Research and Scholarly Activity Framework, department Research Activity Plans, individual research and scholarly activity plans, validation documentation and CPD records, to confirm LEG's understanding of current research and advanced scholarship of curriculum staff discipline and that such knowledge and understanding directly informs and enhances its teaching. It also considered whether there is active engagement with research and/or advanced scholarship to a level commensurate with the level of the qualification offered.

248. The assessment team noted that LEG ensures that higher education academic staff are allocated one hour for every three hours of module delivery to engage with relevant research and advanced scholarship activity, which is managed by Heads of Department. The assessment team noted this was good practice and allows for curriculum staff to engage with research and scholarship effectively.

249. The departmental Research Activity Plans, which are active for an 18-month period, align to the Research and Scholarly Activity Framework's guiding principles. The assessment team reviewed the Research and Scholarly Activity Log for Creative Arts and Sport & Health – Continuous Professional Development 2022-23, documenting professional practice and research outputs. Individual research and scholarly activity plans are used in the performance review process, encouraging staff to consider and identify future development in their discipline, professional knowledge and experience. The assessment team reviewed eight individual research and scholarly activity plans covering creative arts, law, leadership and business, sport, health and biosciences. The example plans span both subject-specific research needs, such as 'the role of oxidised cholesterol in health and disease', and scholarly research such as 'personalising individual progress reviews'. The assessment team reviewed a sample of performance reviews. The sample included discussion around research and scholarly activity. The sample Programme Manager Performance Review documents forward targets relating to research and scholarly activity and continuous professional development activity.

250. Research and Scholarly activity is one of the 12 sections within the Validated Programme Proposal document. The programme proposal template provided documents and tracks when programme proposals are submitted, alongside programme proposal comments, suggested actions and any conditions the panel may suggest. The assessment team reviewed the Programme Validation Approval Report for BA (Hons) Concept Art Level 6 Top Up, which commended the recognition of the importance of research and the encouragement for students to engage in research alongside staff. Validation minutes for the Foundation Degree Healthcare Play Specialism Validation Event note discussion that the programme proposal document provided evidence of good staff engagement with research. The assessment team noted that minutes from the Foundation Degree Film and Screen Media Validation Event evidenced discussion on how to develop student research skills alongside subject-specific conferences and industry steering groups input. The Validated Programme Proposal document expects study teams to undertake evaluation of research and scholarly activity as

part of the validation process. Examples reviewed include the Foundation Degree Animal Management and Behaviour, Foundation Degree Healthcare Assistant Practitioner, Foundation Degree Film and Screen Media. The Validated Programme Proposal document ensures that staff use their research and scholarship to directly inform the design of curriculum content, which is then scrutinised by a panel.

251. The assessment team was provided with CPD records for the Creative Arts subject area, and Sport and Health, for the 2022-2023 academic year. These detail research, scholarship and professional practice that curriculum staff have undertaken. These range from qualifications achieved, such as PhDs and safeguarding training, to research outputs such as conference papers, attendance and presentations. The records include examples of external curriculum development activities alongside professional practice outputs such as exhibitions and theatre productions. The assessment team noted the CPD records evidence that staff are engaging with opportunities to advance their discipline knowledge, directly impacting on their ability to teach a contemporary curriculum.

252. The assessment team concluded that LEG understands current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline and that such knowledge and understanding directly informs and enhances their teaching. LEG actively engages with research and/or advanced scholarship to a level commensurate with the level of the qualification offered.

253. To test whether there are sufficient opportunities to engage in reflection and evaluation of their learning, teaching and assessment practice for staff, the assessment team considered a range of evidence consisting of module review documentations and teaching observation. The team noted that opportunities were provided through two main routes – the teaching observation scheme set out in section C1.1a and through module review documentation. Module reviews are a process by which LEG reassures itself that modules are actively reflected upon by the module leader and any changes made for the next academic year.

254. The assessment team reviewed the Module Review Form which ask the tutors to reflect on the teaching methods, student grades, student feedback, teaching and learning activities and assessment type. It requires the tutors to identify future research or investigation into the subject development to further improve the module. The assessment team reviewed Creative Arts – Module Review Creative Professional. The module leader reflects that the assessment method was new and had received positive student feedback. No changes were proposed as part of the module review of Creative Professional. Reflection is also incorporated into the programme or module amendment process offering a further opportunity for staff to reflect and evaluate their learning, teaching and assessment practice. The assessment team reviewed two modification forms: UC Modification Form Cert Ed 2023 and Modification Form Photography 2023. In the case of Modification Form Cert Ed, the proposed change was informed by new professional standards and current educational research. In Modification Form Photography, the proposed changes were informed by curriculum staff reflecting on the assessment tasks' alignment to the learning outcomes. Both examples evidence curriculum staff engagement with reflection and evaluation of their learning, teaching and assessment practice. Training incorporated into the DELTAR programme also provides opportunities for staff to develop these practices (see paragraph 232) through modules covering topics such as improving teaching and learning, assessment and feedback practices and evaluation.

255. The 2022-23 LTO report evidences staff reflection and evaluation of their learning and assessment practice. Each staff member being observed is encouraged to reflect on their

practice and identify areas for feedback and future action, including any emerging skill development requirements.

256. The assessment team concluded that staff have sufficient opportunities to engage in reflection and evaluation of their learning, teaching and assessment practice.

257. The assessment team considered evidence for developmental opportunities aimed at enabling staff at LEG to enhance their practice and scholarship.

258. The assessment team found that the performance management review process identifies specific training or developmental needs aimed at enhancing practice and scholarship.

259. The DELTAR programme, is informed by wider strategic priorities and educational developments. The programme supports staff to continue to develop their practice and includes specific modules to support this, such as 'Higher education practitioners as researchers' and 'Wider professional practice'. LEG intends to have staff complete two modules of the DELTAR programme per academic year to ensure continuous development.

260. The DELTAR programme has been mapped to the Higher Education Academy (HEA) – UK Professional Standards Framework 2012 and has been approved by Advance HE. Staff are also supported to gain accreditation of the HEA, which allows staff to evidence their professional teaching and learning practice and be recognised as fellows, senior fellows or principal fellows of the HEA. It is the assessment team's view that this represents good practice and will enable curriculum staff to be rewarded for reflecting and evidencing their teaching practice. The scheme offers workshops and mentoring to support staff in providing evidence for submission directly to the HEA to gain recognition. These align to three categories: Areas of activity, Core knowledge and Professional values. Advanced professional recognition is recorded on the UCLeeds Staff Qualifications document reviewed at performance management reviews. The assessment team noted in the UCLeeds Staff Qualifications, dated January 2024, that 22 staff have Advance HE associate fellow, fellow or senior fellowship status, varying by department. The assessment team would encourage LEG to continue to support curriculum staff to gain accreditation to the HEA as good practice.

261. As covered in paragraph 244, the annual LEG Unlocking Potential Conference and the LEG Higher Education Festival of Scholarly Activity and Research provides two internal forums for staff to disseminate their practice and receive feedback to support them in the development of their own practice and scholarship.

262. The assessment team concluded that developmental opportunities aimed at enabling staff to enhance their practice and scholarship are provided by LEG.

263. The assessment team reviewed the procedures and evidence pertaining to opportunities to gain experience in curriculum development and assessment design and to engage with the activities of other higher education providers, for example through becoming external examiners, validation panel members or external reviewers.

264. The assessment team noted that LEG has supported staff to gain external examiner appointments through developing staff to complete Advance HE external examiner training.

265. The assessment team was provided with a summary of staff qualifications held by staff involved in the delivery of higher education, which records 16 members of curriculum staff acting as external examiners for other higher education institutions that provide higher education external to LEG. Ten curriculum staff have been active on validation panel events for external higher education institutions, inputting into the development of degree programmes externally. Six staff members are external reviewers for the Office for Students, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, or an external higher education body. The assessment team noted that opportunities to gain experience to engage with activities of other higher education providers, for example through becoming external examiners, validation panel members or external reviewers, are not equally distributed by department. The team would encourage LEG to ensure the distribution of engagement with external examiner roles and engagement with external validation events of degree programmes is evenly distributed to strengthen the experience and knowledge of the curriculum staff.

266. The current validation process for foundation degrees (see B3.1) requires engagement from external bodies, employers and academics to input into the design of the programme to ensure it is relevant and current. The validation and approval of new programmes, and periodic review of existing programmes, requires independent internal involvement in the form of panel membership of LEG higher curriculum staff. These opportunities have provided a method of expanding knowledge and understanding of programme development and design for curriculum staff at LEG. Further to this, opportunities are also provided for members of new programme teams to sit on validation panels as observers and expand their experience and skill development. The assessment team noted the statement in the self-evaluation document that the Head of Research and Development is actively seeking opportunities for staff to be involved in external validations to enable more staff to gain knowledge from this experience.

267. The assessment team reviewed the DELTAR programme which seeks to support curriculum development and design. The approval processes of new programmes are clearly articulated and provide sufficient support to staff through provision of guidance, use of templates and exemplars (see also paragraphs 170, 278-279).

268. The assessment team reviewed evidence that LEG staff are able to engage with activities of other higher education providers, for example, through becoming external examiners, validation panel members or external reviewers and concluded that the procedures and evidence pertaining to opportunities to gain experience in curriculum development and assessment design are available.

269. To test if LEG demonstrates expertise in providing feedback on assessment which is timely, constructive and developmental, the assessment team reviewed the NSS results relating to assessment, moderation assessment forms and feedback provided to the students via annotations to scripts, assessment feedback forms and external examiner reports.

270. The team considered a sample of seven assessment feedback forms covering two modules on the Foundation Degree Graphic Design and Illustration programme and a corresponding internal moderation form. In this sample, the assessment team found feedback to be constructive and developmental. For example, it explained what the student had done well and provided clear instructions on where there were gaps, such as a lack of source material to support arguments and missing in-text citations. Students were also signposted to

additional support available via academic support sessions and online resources in preparation for future assessments. The assessment team also noted, however, that there was some inconsistency in the volume and detail of the feedback provided by different markers across the sample of modules reviewed, but considered that on balance, the feedback provided within the sample was constructive and developmental.

271. The assessment team also reviewed a sample of student work which had assessor feedback comments annotated throughout the student script submission and noted further examples to demonstrate constructive and developmental feedback in the marking of student work. The scripts also clearly set out general comments in addition to feedback and feedforward commentary, to support the student to enhance their practice for future assessments.

272. The assessment team reviewed three internal moderation forms to assess if the internal moderation process ensures that feedback is timely, constructive and developmental. For example, the Internal Moderation form notes the assessor's mark, moderator's mark and agreed mark with discussion captured between the moderator and assessor confirming that feedback is fair and supportive with developmental action points. In an example Internal Moderation Report for the LLB (Hons) Law programme, the assessment team noted that the moderator provides commentary under a 'general comments and issues' section, such as recommending the assessor provides further developmental action points. A further example captures a suggestion from the moderator for the programme team to review the assessment brief in relation to the assessment word count ahead of the following academic year, and improve the clarity of future developmental action points for the students. The assessor also requests a discussion with the moderator before grades are released. The assessment team's view is that the internal moderation process is adequate for ensuring feedback is timely, constructive and developmental.

273. Staff who are new to higher education receive training in assessment and grading which includes information on assessment processes, regulations and feedback practice. Training and development in relation to assessment is facilitated via the DELTAR programme and includes the module 'Assessment and feedback practices in Higher Education'. The training includes constructive alignment, authentic assessment, continuous assessment and academic integrity. The assessment team considered the PowerPoint slides for the two sessions and considers the content of the training to be in line with introductions offered in other UK higher education institutions.

274. In addition to training, the standards required for assessment feedback are outlined in the 'Assessment and Moderation Handbook', including the requirement to return assessed and internally moderated work to students within three weeks (wherever possible). The internal moderation form details both assessment and moderation dates and details of the assignment start date, due date and feedback date are provided for each submission of work in Turnitin. The assessment team view this as standard practice within the sector.

275. To assess if feedback on assessment is timely, the assessment team considered LEG's student satisfaction scores against assessment and feedback from the 2022-23 NSS, which included two questions relating to how often students have received work on time and how often feedback has helped improve their work. The team noted that LEG reported a 91.9 per cent student satisfaction score for assessment and feedback in 2023, which tracks 3.1

percentage points above the benchmark and concluded that this indicates assessment feedback is received on time and is developmental.

276. The assessment team reviewed a sample of 12 external examiner reports provided by LEG, spanning academic years 2021-22 and 2022-23. These included BSc (Hons) Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Science, Foundation Degree Sports Performance and Exercise, Foundation Degree Health and Wellbeing, Foundation Degree Supporting Teaching and Learning, BSc (Hons) Sport Performance and Exercise, BA (Hons) Business, Enterprise and Management, Foundation Degree Business, Enterprise and Management, LLB (Hons) Law, among others. The assessment team noted that external examiners have commented on the quality of assessment processes and feedback. External examiner reports note that moderation procedures have been adhered to and samples of feedback they have reviewed demonstrate clear wording and clear links to the learning outcomes with clear feedback and feed forward points relating to transferable and academic skills and knowledge.

277. Based on the evidence provided, the assessment team concluded that the evidence of expertise in providing feedback on assessment, which is timely, constructive and developmental is present.

278. To test the experience of curriculum development and assessment design of academic staff at LEG, the assessment team reviewed the Validated Programme Proposal and Approval documents. The Validated Programme Proposal Documents and Approval Documents outline the curriculum content and assessment design and are approved by a panel who confirm that the curriculum content and assessment design is appropriate. The assessment team reviewed the Programme Validation Approval Report for BA (Hons) Concept Art Level 6 Top Up which noted a condition from the panel to review the number of module learning outcomes for each module with a view to increasing them. The assessment team reviewed Validated Programme Proposal documents for Foundation Degree Animal Management and Behaviour, Foundation Degree Healthcare Assistant Practitioner and the Validated Programme Approval Document for Foundation Degree Film and Screen Media. Through its review of this sample, the assessment team concluded that academic staff have the required experience of designing appropriate curriculum and assessment.

279. The validation and approval process, and periodic reviews of existing courses, offer the opportunity for staff to experience validation panel membership outside of their own department. LEG also provides opportunities for staff with less curriculum development and assessment design experience to sit on validation panels as observers. The assessment team reviewed the DELTAR programme which includes curriculum development and assessment design training for academic staff through modules such as 'Improving Teaching and Learning in Higher Education' and 'Assessment and Feedback Practices'. The modules include material and course exemplar materials to support academic staff with curriculum development and assessment design.

280. The Chief External Examiner report comments that the standards of the awards are compatible with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education subject benchmark statements and similar programmes within other institutions and does not indicate any evidence that suggests that staff experience of curriculum development and assessment design is inadequate.

281. The assessment team reviewed the NSS scores for 2023 for 'Teaching on my course' (93.3 per cent) and 'Assessment and feedback' (91.9 per cent), and concluded that the results further indicate that the design of the curriculum and assessment design, as experienced by the students, is positive and above the benchmark.

282. Ten curriculum staff have been active on validation panel events for external higher education providers, inputting into the development of degree programmes externally. The UCLeeds Staff Qualification document tracks staff engagement and experience of developing curriculum, development of modules and internal validation panel membership. The assessment team noted it was good practice to track staff experience in this area, noting that opportunities to extend curriculum development, design and approval experience are discussed in Performance Review Objectives. The assessment team formed the view that opportunities are provided to support the role of internal and external academics on validation panels extending the experience and knowledge of staff.

283. The assessment team concluded that staff at LEG have, and are given sufficient opportunities to gain, experience of curriculum development and assessment design.

284. To determine if LEG is engaged with the activities of providers of higher education in other organisations (through, for example, involvement as external examiners, validation panel members, or external reviewers), the assessment team considered the number of staff acting as external examiners in the UCLeeds Staff Qualifications document dated January 2024. This lists 16 staff members who are external examiners and ten staff who have been involved with external validations. Furthermore, six staff members are external reviewers for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Office for Students or other external higher education body. The assessment team noted that while all departments are engaged in the activities of providers of higher education in other organisations, the distribution of responsibilities varies by department (see paragraph 265).

285. The assessment team concluded that engagement with the activities of providers of higher education in other organisations (through, for example, involvement as external examiners, validation panel members, or external reviewers) is evident.

286. Based on the evidence assessed, it is the assessment team's view that LEG has made rigorous assessment of the skills/expertise required to teach all students and has the appropriate staff/student ratios.

287. To assess if LEG has the appropriate staff/student ratios it was important for the assessment team to understand the business planning model in relation to resource. The assessment team noted that LEG operates a business planning model which places the responsibility for planning budgets with the Heads of Department. LEG provides a framework within which each Head of Department produces a budget plan. The plans are then reviewed, analysed and reviewed by the appropriate senior and executive leadership teams. Any adjustments are made, as appropriate, based on student numbers.

288. The assessment team noted that the typical student group sizes at LEG vary between a minimum of ten and a maximum of 20. Teaching hours are allocated using a ready reckoner to ensure that staff are not over-burdened by the volume of student support and assessment of work. The ready reckoner considers management responsibilities and recommends the

maximum number of tutor group responsibility. Workloads are regularly reviewed in consultation with line managers and resourcing considerations are taken into account in the course approval process.

289. To assess if LEG has made rigorous assessment of the skills/expertise required to teach all student, the assessment team reviewed the level of expertise required at the staff recruitment stage. LEG's higher education staff are required to hold a recognised teaching qualification. The assessment team viewed an example HE Lecturer Job Description which confirms that LEG require all staff to hold a Level 5 teaching qualification, a relevant first degree or equivalent in the subject area, English and maths at Level 2 or above and relevant up-to-date subject knowledge. To assess if the expertise required to teach all students is appropriate, the assessment team reviewed an example programme proposal document for the Foundation Degree Healthcare Assistant Practitioner which requires information regarding the skills and expertise of the curriculum staff relevant to the course content. In the example reviewed by the assessment team, the course teams had demonstrated their area(s) of expertise in relation to the course content. The narrative identified that all members of the teaching team hold relevant qualifications and have appropriate experience, but that there was also a need to recruit a registered nurse to deliver clinical aspects of the programme. Through its review of staff qualifications and programme proposal documentation, the assessment team concluded that staff have the relevant skills and expertise in relation to their subject specialism to teach all students.

290. The assessment team concluded that LEG has made rigorous assessment of the skills/expertise required to teach all students and the appropriate staff/student ratios.

291. LEG recruits staff following its Safer Recruitment Policy, which has been developed in compliance with the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance and Equality Act 2010. There is a six-stage staff recruitment process, which includes proposal of the role in business planning, raising of the job requisition form, approval, job advertisement, shortlisting and interviews, onboarding and pre-employment checks. All applications are anonymised to reduce bias, with two members of staff shortlisting to add objectivity.

292. The assessment team noted that a central recruitment team gives advice, guidance and support throughout the recruitment process. The central team carries out mandatory pre-employment checks for all new staff, including proof of right to work, an enhanced DBS check, a children's barred list check and subsequent adults' barred list check (if the role involves working with vulnerable adults). Two professional references are required and a fitness to work check is carried out by LEG's occupational health partners. For staff involved in teaching work and management roles, a prohibition check and section 128 check are also undertaken respectively to ensure that staff are not prohibited from teaching or banned from being involved in the management and governance of a school or college. Online guidance and training resources are available to support recruiting managers with the recruitment process itself and use of LEG's recruitment and onboarding platform.

293. The assessment team concluded that LEG has appropriate staff recruitment practices.

Conclusions

294. It is the assessment team's view that LEG assures itself that it has appropriate numbers of staff to teach its students, and that everyone involved in teaching or supporting student learning, and in the assessment of student work, is appropriately qualified, supported and developed to the level and subject of the qualification awarded.

295. The assessment team concluded that LEG has relevant learning, teaching and assessment practices that are informed by reflections and evaluation of subject, professional practice and educational scholarship and are active with development of their subject discipline and have opportunities to enhance their practice and scholarship through the DELTAR development programme and through individual Research Activity Plans and through the Research and Scholarly Activity Framework. Internal and external opportunities such as the Unlocking Potential Conference, Higher Education Research Festival, and Advance HE College-based Higher Education Festival of Scholarly Activity and Research, enable staff to disseminate their practice.

296. The assessment team also concluded that LEG staff have academic and professional expertise as evidenced by staff holding teaching qualifications and academic qualifications commensurate to the level of award. The assessment team further concluded that the staff have experience of curriculum development and assessment design informed by research and professional practice. The assessment team additionally concluded that LEG has appropriate student/staff ratios.

Assessment of DAPs criterion D: Environment for supporting students

Criterion D1: Enabling student development and achievement

Advice to the OfS

297. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion D1: Enabling student development and achievement because it meets sub-criteria D1.1.

298. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows in summary that LEG has in place, monitors and evaluates arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

299. This view is based on specific consideration of the evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside any other relevant information.

> **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

300. It is the assessment team's view that LEG meets assessment criterion D1.1 because it has in place, monitors and evaluates arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

301. The assessments team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows that LEG has met the evidence requirements for D1.1 and any other relevant evidence requirements.

Reasoning

302. To inform the assessment team's evaluation of whether LEG takes a comprehensive strategic and operational approach to determine and evaluate how it enables student development and achievement for its diverse body of students, the assessment team reviewed LEG's higher education 'Student Support Strategy', Leeds City College Strategy 2023-26, Care Leavers and Estranged Students Support Policy, 'Student Support Procedure', 'Reasonable Adjustments Procedure', the 'Learning and Teaching Policy', programme 'Approval, Review and Modification Handbook', the Personal Tutorial Policy and example Tutorial Scheme of Work, 'Widening Participation and Outreach Annual Review 2021-22', 'Mental Health Policy', 'Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 to 2024-25' and 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Report 2021-22', among other evidence sources.

303. The assessment team reviewed the HE Student Support Strategy 2023-24 to understand how LEG enables student development and achievement for its diverse cohort. The assessment team acknowledge the diverse student cohort in 2022-23 with characteristics as follows:

- 32 per cent Black, Asian or minority ethnic
- 30 per cent with declared learning difficulties

- 57 per cent mature
- 60 per cent from Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile 1-2
- 47 per cent from POLAR 4 quintile 1-2.

The Access and Participation Plan shows analysis of continuation, attainment and progression rates by demographic group.

304. LEG's Higher Education Student Support Strategy sets out its strategic vision for supporting higher education students and how this is operationalised, which is aligned with LEG's overarching values. The strategy is based on four key principles: restorative practice, prevention and early intervention, inclusion, student-centred and holistic. The student support team offers mental health support, learning support, welfare support, and progression support.

305. The strategy outlines LEG's aim to deliver accessible and inclusive support for all students through the work of the student support team. The team offers a range of specialist support covering mental health and counselling, study skills, reasonable adjustments, Disabled Students' Allowance, finance, careers and progression – which it delivers face to face and online, on a one-to-one or group basis, as relevant to the individual student or cohort. The delivery of support is regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure teams respond effectively, such as through the Student Support Committee and Programme Managers Meetings, which include the Higher Education Student Support Manager, and representatives from the library and student body.

306. The assessment team reviewed LEG's Student Support Procedure, which underpins its Student Support Strategy and was approved by Academic Board in 2020. The procedure aims to ensure that student support procedures are implemented consistently across LEG's higher education provision, and that staff and students are aware of how to access student support while studying. The referral process enables students to refer themselves for specific support in-person or via an online referral form, but referrals can also be made by academic and library staff. Once referred, the relevant member of the student support team makes contact with the student to proceed with identifying and arranging support. Applicants who identify support needs are referred by the admissions team and the student support team assess their needs, give advice and ensure that support is in place prior to commencement of study. Numbers of students requesting and accessing support is monitored and reported on annually through the Higher Education Support Area Annual Review. Following its review of the support procedure and associated evidence, the assessment team formed the view that types of support, and how to access support are clearly articulated to staff and students.

307. LEG's higher education Student Support Committee aims to focus on the support needs of students through 'sharing practices, devising solutions to meet challenge and opportunities relating to supporting students' and 'consideration and implementation of strategies for improving gaps in access and continuation, success and progressions that puts students from underrepresented groups at the forefront'. The committee meets three times per year and reports to Academic Board. Its membership includes representatives from across the curriculum, central services and support teams, such as the UCLeeds Student Support Manager, Welfare and Progression Officer, Counselling and Mental Health Officers, and academic staff. The assessment team reviewed the minutes from a meeting of the Student Support Committee in 2022-23 and noted that items of discussion included the Access and

Participation Plan, an update on student support, and sharing of practice relating to mechanisms and initiatives to support student continuation and success. The minutes also captured a plan to nominate a staff representative from each curriculum area to work with the student support team to identify support needs for their area. This also included the implementation of a shared spreadsheet for curriculum and support staff to record instances of students requiring support and support intervention.

308. The assessment team reviewed the minutes of a Course Committee Meeting for BA (Hons) Business Enterprise and Management to test how LEG determines and evaluates how it enables student development and achievement at programme level. The minutes contain an action plan for the academic year which includes an action to work with the Student Support Manager to ensure students receive guidance on and are supported to identify any support needs early, to enable intervention to be as effective as possible. The plan also identifies an action to work with the student support team to implement individual academic skills sessions for Level 6 students to increase their grades.

309. The assessment team observed that LEG has developed a Care Experienced and Estranged Students' Guide to enable student development and achievement for this particular group of students. The student-facing guide includes support at a glance, funding advice, financial support information, accommodation information – including acting as guarantor for the accommodation agreement, student support access and external organisation support. UCLeeds has a care leavers webpage which outlines the support available, including pathway planning 13+, accommodation, education, employment and training, health and financial advice. LEG has taken the 'Stand Alone Pledge' to commit to supporting estranged students. The pledge includes a bursary of up to £1,000, financial support for interview travel and/or course materials up to 50 per cent of the costs, support for graduation gown hire and photographs. LEG pledges to work with accommodation providers to be flexible about the need for a guarantor, designated support from the higher education Counselling and Mental Health Officer and a mentoring scheme. LEG offers personalised tours, taster days and one-to-one application support and contextual offer-making to care leavers. This strategic approach has seen LEG increase the number of care leavers applying to LEG. Numbers have increased from 11 students in 2020-21 to 20 students in 2022-23. The assessment team's view is that the guidance available to care leavers, the financial support and support provided pre- and post-entry is good practice and has impacted on an increase in care leavers accessing LEG provision.

310. To inform the evaluation of whether LEG takes a comprehensive strategic and operational approach to determine and evaluate how it enables student development and achievement for its diverse body of students, the assessment team reviewed the 'Higher Education Personal Tutoring Policy 2022-23'which describes the institutional expectations of tutoring within LEG. The overarching policy draws on principles identified by the United Kingdom Advising and Tutoring Associations' Framework, which is the UK's professional body for personal tutoring in further and higher education in the UK. The assessment team considered this to be good practice. The overarching policy was approved by Academic Board in September 2022 and is underpinned by eight 'principles of effective personal tutoring provision' which LEG explains have "been informed by a review of existing and emerging research and policy relating to personal tutoring, student attainment and transition in Higher Education". The principles include supporting students, flexible learning and staff development in training, which the policy outlines will be demonstrated by consideration of

student characteristics and specific challenges to inform effective personal tutoring, monitoring of student progress through data and requirement for personal tutors to undertake a structured plan of CPD. The assessment team reviewed an example Tutorial Scheme of Work which outlines a mix of group and one-to-one tutorial support that occurs on a weekly basis. The team noted common delivery of core areas such as employability, professional development, academic and life skills including sessions on planning and organisation, mindsets, academic reading and writing, Harvard referencing, proofreading, critical thinking, mental health and wellbeing, drugs and alcohol, gambling awareness, stress management, diet and exercise, among other content. The assessment team observed a balance between academic and personal development content and regarded this as good practice.

311. The assessment team also considered how LEG plans to support the needs of international students in line with its new International Recruitment Strategy to increase the number of international students studying at further and higher education level across LEG. LEG identified that support for higher education international students will be delivered through an existing group higher education quality and standards service which currently co-ordinates support for international students studying at the other higher education group member, Leeds Conservatoire. LEG currently provides students with the opportunity to access English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) qualifications alongside their study if appropriate, but the strategy also includes plans for LEG to set up its own English as a Foreign Language (EFL) provision, to be delivered through Leeds City College, to support students progressing to UCLeeds. The assessment team also noted that the strategy references the additional investment required for supporting international students and were of the view that overall LEG demonstrated sufficient consideration to the support needs of international students.

312. To determine how LEG enables student development and achievement for its diverse body of students, the assessment team reviewed the Assessment and Moderation Handbook. The handbook encourages curriculum staff in its guidance on writing assessments, to include two assessment tasks with different assessment dates to spread the workload for students and allow developmental feedback to be provided to students at an early stage. It also advises staff to that a variety of assessment methods should be included to increase motivation and ensure that equality and diversity is addressed. The assessment team reviewed Annex 2 of the PGCE Programme Specification which evidences no more than two tasks per module and a variety of assessment types such as reports, critical commentary, presentation, research study and an academic poster, among others. The assessment team view this supportive approach to assessment types and workload as a means to enable student development and achievement for all students.

313. Through its review of the evidence, the assessment team concluded that LEG takes a comprehensive strategic and operational approach to determine and evaluate how it enables student development and achievement for its diverse body of students.

314. The assessment team found that students are advised about, and inducted into, their programmes in an effective way and account is taken of different students' choices and needs. To inform this decision, the assessment team reviewed LEG's Higher Education Admissions Policy and Admissions Procedure, the 2023-24 Welcome Guide and Induction Schedule, Induction Survey Results, and UCLeeds Module Specification Templates, among other evidence sources.

315. The Higher Education Admissions Policy applies to all higher education awards at LEG and its purpose is to ensure that the Admissions Policy and procedures are implemented consistently. LEG policy states that it welcomes applications from all backgrounds and abilities. The Admissions Policy details the processing of applications. The Admissions team works with the Student Support team when processing applications who disclose learning difficulties or disabilities. The Student Support team will liaise with the applicant to ensure they are supported ahead of their course starting. The Higher Education Admissions Procedure September 2022 outlines entry requirements, application decisions, appeals, clearing, and roles and responsibilities. The assessment team noted that the website, prospectus and other publicity materials (such as the UC Hub Support and Wellbeing Screenshot) include student support information for learning support, careers and progression, wellbeing and welfare, mental health, financial support and safeguarding to allow students to make informed choices.

316. The Higher Education Admissions Policy states that, following confirmation of an offer, the admissions team provide prospective students with a range of information including finance and accommodation advice. This is also supplemented by the Welcome Guide which includes information relating to facilities, finance, travel, student support, student life, opportunities, student voice and student responsibilities. Students also receive a copy of their Higher Education Programme Handbook which includes course information, student support details, information about the virtual learning environment, academic regulations and guidelines on attendance. The assessment team found the programme handbook to be comprehensive and informative.

317. LEG offers pre-application and enrolment support to students to help their transition to UCLeeds. Example activities include one-to-one application and enrolment support, campus tours, Disabled Students' Allowance application support, higher education study skills programme, transition activities, student finance advice, preparing for higher education workshops, student support information video and parents and carers information sessions. The assessment team reviewed an 'Example Support Communications for Care leaver Applicant' email which demonstrated contact being initiated by the Head of Widening Participation, Outreach and Projects to offer the applicant support and a personalised tour. The UCLeeds Student Room is a live webpage that houses information relating to induction, support and wellbeing, fees and funding, accommodation and student engagement. Details on the induction process include a checklist and information on how to enrol. The assessment team reviewed the resources and concluded that the induction process – information on the transition to higher education, events such as the freshers' fair, student support and contact information – was clear and effective.

318. The example Level 4 and 5 course induction schedule for 2023-24 reviewed by the assessment team showed evidence of coverage of IT and VLE skills support, details of library services, academic integrity, student behaviour, and wellbeing. An 'Induction Checklist' provides guidance to teaching teams on the topics and activities they should cover with students, to ensure that all students have been inducted into their study programme and are aware of student support services. The assessment team reviewed the Induction Survey Results for 2022-23 and noted that, although the response rate across programmes was varied, ranging from 3 per cent to 88 per cent, overall 87 per cent of students agreed they felt welcomed to the course and 83 per cent felt the course induction had given them confidence to be able to cope with the course.

319. From its view of LEG's higher education admissions policy and procedure, induction, pre-enrolment and programme-specific resources, the assessment team concluded that students are advised about, and inducted into their programmes in an effective way, and account is taken of different students' choices and needs.

320. To test whether LEG has effective student and staff advisory, support and counselling services which are monitored, and any resource needs arising are considered, the assessment team reviewed the roles within the student support team, the referral process, governance and a sample of higher education student support annual reviews from 2021-22 and 2022-23, among other evidence sources.

321. LEG states that in 2016-17 the first Learning Support Officer was appointed specifically to support higher education students with difficulties and/or disabilities. In 2019-20, the Student Support team was expanded due to demand and now consists of a Student Support Manager, two Counselling and Mental Health Officers, two Trainee Counsellors, a Learning Support Officer and a Welfare and Progression Officer. Other staff involved in support for higher education students include an Academic Librarian, Widening Participation and Outreach Manager, Higher Education Engagement and Promotions Officer and a Uni Connect Outreach Officer. Curriculum teams also have designated support staff within their subject area, including Student Support Managers, Academic Support Tutors and Coaching Tutors, Placement coordinators and Study Skills Coaches.

322. Regular monitoring of student support functions is undertaken for example, for student wellbeing via Mental Health and Wellbeing Reports. Annual monitoring is performed through the higher education Student Support Annual Review. This report gives an overview of activity and performance and analysis of gender, ethnicity and age accessing support. The retention of students with additional support needs by course is monitored and reviewed. Indicators of the effectiveness of the services and associated monitoring include data on students who were identified as having additional support needs, where 85 per cent of 250 identified continued or completed their course in 2021-22.

323. The higher education Student Support Annual Review includes identification of any modifications to practice, resource needs and policy reviews that are required. The assessment team noted that through the monitoring process, an increase in progression support activity was identified as a resource need to support student employability. The Support Area Annual Review for 2021-22 noted that several workshops were offered in the 2021-22 to support students with completing job applications. This led to the creation of Employability Week in 2022-23 and was supported by the Leeds Enterprise Project and 30 local SMEs. Through the monitoring process, specialised induction packs for students who are refugees or seeking asylum was identified as a specific need. The higher education Student Support Annual Review also includes student feedback for mental health support, learning support, and student support. The student feedback presented in the review is positive: comments include "the University Centre is doing a good job in supporting students", "I think there is a good network in place" and "I think it is amazing the university offers counselling sessions it really helped me understand myself more, I'm really glad this is available for people who really need it". The assessment team additionally noted positive student feedback on the quality of student support, which was reflected in 92.4 per cent of students being satisfied with the area of Academic Support in the 2022-23 NSS scores.

324. The assessment team concluded that LEG has effective student and staff advisory, support and counselling services which are monitored, and any resource needs arising are considered.

325. To test if LEG's administrative support systems enable it to monitor student progression and performance accurately and provide timely, secure and accurate information to satisfy academic and non-academic management needs, the assessment team reviewed copies of data reports, annual reviews and meeting minutes. These included recent data reports to the Academic Board regarding admissions, attendance and retention, a sample of programme, support and UCLeeds annual reviews.

326. LEG advised that data reports are compiled using the central information system, currently ProSolution and PowerBi. These will be replaced by Tribal's SITS system moving forward from 2024-25. The Admissions Officer compiles monthly data reports on applications which are reported to Academic Board, along with Retention and Attendance Reports. Live data packs are compiled by the Higher Education Data Analyst, and these are made available for Programme Managers and Heads of Department to discuss in the first week of every month.

327. The assessment team reviewed a copy of an admissions report to Academic Board from the 2022-23 academic year which detailed the number of applications received or rejected, enrolments, target enrolments, offers made by level and offers accepted. The assessment team noted that this is a typical report that enables monitoring of student applications, enrolments and offers accepted.

328. The assessment team reviewed the live data pack, 'Attendance and Retention Report April 2023' which details attendance as a percentage for the current month in comparison with the previous year, alongside enrolment and withdrawal numbers by course. The assessment team noted that the report would enable monitoring of students' attendance and retention in an easily digestible manner that would allow for action to be taken swiftly should the need be identified.

329. Through review of a sample of Programme Manager Annual Reviews from 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23, the assessment team saw evidence that data is provided to Programme Managers to analyse, monitor and identify future improvements and actions relating to student retention, achievement, completion and continuation. It includes module performance data, academic misconduct data and extenuating circumstances data. It also includes student feedback and induction and enrolment review. It includes data for graduate destinations and employer engagement, External Examiner and Academic Reviewer feedback alongside NSS data. Each Programme Manager analyses the data and produces a programme level report for Annual Review which includes an action plan arising from data trends. This is discussed at the Programme Managers' Presentation of Annual Review and Data meetings and as part of the Mid-year Review process. The assessment team reviewed the Presentation of Annual Review and Data minutes from 25 October 2023, where the curriculum staff team, Head of Research and Learning Development, Deputy Head of STEM, Higher Education Widening Participation and Outreach, Student Support Manager, Deputy Head of Data, Group Director of Quality, Associate Dean of Higher Education and Higher Education Registrar were present. The Programme Reviews are monitored at the Annual and Mid-year Review points and form the basis of the overall 'UCLeeds Overall Annual Review'. The assessment team reviewed example Programme Reviews and monitoring of associated action plans, including the

Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) Business, Enterprise and Management Award Committee Minutes from 2020-21, which provide evidence of discussion and progress made against the Forward Looking Action Plan 2021-22. The assessment team were satisfied with the evidence provided of Annual Performance Data, including example data for 2021-22, and could see how this is used to make comparisons across the provision.

330. The assessment team formed the view that the administrative support systems enable LEG to monitor student progression and performance accurately and provide timely, secure and accurate information to satisfy academic and non-academic management needs.

331. To determine if the organisation provides opportunities for all students to develop skills that enable their academic, personal and professional progression, for example academic, employment and future career management skills, the assessment team reviewed a range of evidence sources including programme approval documentation, strategic planning and approval documents and Careers and Progression Support.

332. Following a review of the Validated Programme Approval Documents for Foundation Degree Animal Management and Behaviour, Foundation Degree Healthcare Assistant Practitioner, Foundation Degree Film and Screen Media the assessment team could see sufficient evidence of professional development skills, such as resilience, motivation, confidence, presentation, time management, preparation for employment, live briefs and networking skills being embedded into curriculum design. The Validated Programme Proposal document has a specific section named 'Enhancing Work-place/Related Learning Opportunities and Facilitating the Development of Employability Skills'. The course teams have provided examples of activities and live briefs included in the curriculum. For example, the Validated Programme Approval Document for the Foundation Degree Film and Screen Media includes examples such as working with external partners to provide live briefs and understanding industry specific roles and expectations of trainee roles. External partners deliver specialist skills workshops and offer opportunities for creative pitches and live briefs. The programme is supported by Connected Campus, Screen Yorkshire and Film Buddy UK which provide access to one-to-one mentoring, CV writing and portfolio building opportunities. The programme offers active registration with 'Screenskills' which offers online and in-person events to early-career professionals, Teaching includes sessions relating to work stress and financial management, alongside the central Employability Week. The proposed structure within the Validated Programme Approval Document for Foundation Degree Film and Screen Media has been informed by consultation with Screen Yorkshire and resulted in new module titles and content, namely Creative Commercial Screen and Working in Visual Media. Both modules include live client briefs which are embedded into the curriculum design and aimed at developing personal and professional skills. The Validated Programme Approval Documents for Foundation Degree Assistant Practitioner (Healthcare) states that all students are required to undertake industry relevant work-based learning in hospitals, community or private settings supported by a designated Professional Practice Tutor. Occupational Standards are mapped through Level 4 and 5 modules.

333. The Strategic Planning Approval (SPA) application has a requirement for programme teams to identify to provide evidence of consultation with employers and detail how employers will be involved in the design and regular review of the programme. The assessment team reviewed the SPA for the Foundation Degree Production Arts as an example, which identifies guest speakers and how work experience is embedded into the course design. The document includes consultation with a range of individuals and employers, including a production

company, a producer and associate artist, and cites opportunities for work experience, identifies a lack of diversity within the sector, the offer of workshops and masterclasses and technical open days. The SPA for Foundation Degree Environmental Science evidences consultation with employers including a global air conditioning company and a gas company. The SPA captures the employers' confirmation that the proposed programme includes the appropriate skills and knowledge, has sustainability content at its core and also includes topics such as management, thermodynamics and mechanics elements.

334. The Foundation Degree Animation Validation Event minutes documents discussion with an employer and the course team. The employer confirms that the proposed course has direct links to industry, commending the course team on their consultation with employers, excellent development of relevant employability skills and industry links. The external academic agreed that the course has good links with industry and established networks and that there are good opportunities available for students to gain work experience. The Departmental Annual Review documentation contains a section dedicated to Employer and Stakeholder Engagement. The Departmental Annual Review documentation for Creative Arts notes examples of employer engagement and provides evidence that the consultation with employers resulted in informing the direction and content of programmes, for example aligning developments within industry to the programme content.

335. The assessment team reviewed the course design process and validation process, which include stakeholder engagement, market intelligence and include employer consultation (see paragraph 174). An Employer Board also provides oversight of the appropriateness of content of education awards across LEG in developing skills for work.

336. The assessment team were made aware of subject-specific graduate schemes such as Go Higher West Yorkshire Graduate Skills Programme, Graduate Scheme UK Film and TV Craft Certificate Hair and Make-up and Screen Yorkshire's Connected Campus initiative. These programmes offer opportunities for graduates to engage with employers, networking events, job vacancies and further training courses. The assessment team views the promotion of these types of networks and opportunities as good practice. The assessment team's review of the Validated Programme Proposal documents identifies common activities across programmes, such as masterclasses, guest speakers, work experience opportunities and live project briefs. The Creative Arts UCL Specialist Speaker Fair offered a week-long summit of talks, workshops and demonstrations with a range of specialist from the creative arts industries, including Urban Wilderness (a landscape and environmental consultancy), Career Support Manager at Screen Yorkshire, Writer and Director and Managing Director of Oxygen Films, Photographer, Afro textured hair specialist, Junior make-up artist for Film and TV, and Technical Specialist Effects Advisor, among others. The Women in Leadership Programme 2022 offered a programme over six weeks of female guest speakers hosting workshops around personal confidence, imposter syndrome and personal branding. Speakers included the Head of Ministerial briefing for Public Affairs and Correspondence at the Civil Service. The assessment team noted the Employability Week was supported by 30 local SMEs which was accessed by a third of the student population. The assessment team view events such as these as good practice. Interview preparation, CV workshops, postgraduate study, job search advice, one-to-one support and mock interviews are provided centrally by the HE Welfare and Progression Officer, Luminate Careers Team and National Careers Service.

337. The UCLeeds Hub provides information and guidance on careers and finding work. The 'HE Student Support Area Annual Review Year 2020-21' states that 120 students have accessed the support on offer, such as CV and application writing, interview preparation and skills development. The 'HE Student Support Annual Review 2022-23' states that 90 per cent of students who accessed progression and welfare found the service supportive, with 93 per cent mentioning that they would recommend the service to their peers; 100 per cent of students would use the service again.

338. Programme Manager Annual Reviews include a dedicated section for graduate destinations, asking the Programme Manager to comment on three-year trend data, identify issues and actions required. The Programme Manager Annual Review document for 2023-24 for Foundation Degree PE and Sports Coaching includes the data but no analysis or commentary is provided. The Annual Review 2021-22 for Foundation Degree Game Development, Game Art and Game Programming states that 86 per cent of students progressed to the BSc Game Development and Production (Top Up). 100 per cent of students from Games Programming progressed to BSc Game Programming (Top Up). The Programme Manager Annual Review 2023-24 for Foundation Degree Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences gives a detailed analysis of student destinations that range from relocation, job opportunities and progressing to Level 6. The UCLeeds Higher Education Annual Review 2021-22 includes a section concerning Graduate Outcomes. The review notes the proportion of students in employment or study dropped from 79 per cent in 2020-21 to 77 per cent in 2021-22. The unemployment rate is 20 per cent for 2021-22 from 16 per cent in 2020-21. The proportion of graduates employed in highly skilled occupations was 46 per cent in 2021-22. The assessment team noted that LEG is taking action in order to explore engagement levels, including a Graduate Outcomes campaign to increase awareness of the survey to increase response rates and develop an alumni network.

339. Academic skill development is embedded within curriculum content and is commented on throughout external examiner reports. For example, the Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) Film and Screen Media External Examiner report comments on the range of technical skills, transferable skills, research and academic skills that students have advanced through course content. The LLB (Hons) Law external examiner comments upon the clear progression of students through each level demonstrating progress in their learning.

340. The assessment team concluded that this evidence demonstrates that the organisation provides opportunities for all students to develop skills that enable their academic, personal and professional progression, for example academic, employment and future career management skills.

341. To test if LEG provides opportunities for all students to develop their skills and make effective use of the learning resources provided, the assessment team reviewed the Higher Education Annual Review 2022-23, Safe Practice Guidance, risk assessments, the Online Library Guide, student feedback including the 2022-23 NSS results, and module surveys and the 2023 Peer Review Report, among other evidence sources. The team considered whether LEG had sufficient resources available to teach the validated course content and found that the UCLeeds Annual Review contains a section dedicated to Resources in some examples provided. The UCLeeds Departmental Creative Arts Annual Review for 2023-24 noted additional resource needs that have been fulfilled. These include buying cameras and updating software. The review notes a new large teaching space for large group projects. The Foundation Degree Dance gained a studio space area and a separate storage workshop

room for the Prosthetics Pathway of Foundation Degree Creative Hair and Media Make-up. The review also details an increase in permanent staffing to support the growth of Foundation Degree Concept Art and Foundation Degree Graphic Design and Illustration. The 2020-21 programme level annual review report for Foundation Degree Game Development, Game Art and Game Programming noted that they required a larger teaching space to enable students to work independently. The subsequent report in 2021-22 noted the resources were sufficient for the current delivery of module content, noting that a teaching space had been expanded. The most recent programme-level annual review template does not appear to contain a dedicated 'Resources' section as demonstrated by the examples provided of the Foundation Degree PE and Sports Coaching and Foundation Degree Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Sciences. The assessment team noted that the National Student Survey data for Learning Resources was weaker than other areas, but not of significant concern at 81.6 per cent with the benchmark at 84.9 per cent. The assessment team considered that learning resources should be included as a point of discussion in all annual review documentation to ensure that programmes monitor and review opportunities to enable students to make use of the learning resources available to them.

342. The assessment team reviewed the Safety Biomed evidence provided by LEG. Some module learning outcomes are specifically designed to test students' understanding of health and safety practices. For example, Foundation Degree Biomedical and Pharmaceutical Science includes the learning outcome 'Work safely within a laboratory environment and show knowledge of hazards, risks and ethical issues with appropriate responses for relevant industries'. The assessment team reviewed Material Data Sheets for Safety Film & TV and Prosthetics which identify the substance being used, identified hazards, composition of materials, and First Aid measures. The assessment team reviewed the Safety Sport Vive Set up, which is an A4 instruction sheet guiding students to assess the safe space required to use the equipment safely. Students are inducted with safe practice demonstrations – as evidenced by the Safety Practical Session Health PowerPoint presentation used in a teaching session to safely induct students in how to consider 'People Moving and Handling'. The assessment team formed the view that LEG provides safe inductions into specialist facilities such as science laboratories, a sensory room, physiological sports laboratories, hair and make-up and prosthetic creation studios. The specialist areas have technical support staff to accompany students using the specialist facilities.

343. The assessment team noted that LEG provides opportunities for all students to develop skills using digital and virtual environments; for example, LEG provides a Google Chromebook/iPad scheme to all new students to enable access to learning resources and blended learning through the virtual learning environment, Blackboard Learn. Staff are provided with adequate training to utilise learning resources appropriately, including through the DELTAR programme, and students are given relevant training during their induction.

344. The assessment team formed the view that LEG provides opportunities for all students to develop skills to make effective use of the learning resources provided, including the safe and effective use of specialist facilities, and the use of digital and virtual environments.

345. To determine if LEG's approach is guided by a commitment to equity, the assessment team reviewed a range of policies including LEG's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Behaviour Policy, Hate Crime Policy, Learning and Teaching Policy. They also reviewed LEG's Access and Participation Plan 2020-25, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Framework Review 2022, Higher Education

Student Support Strategy, Widening Participation and Outreach Strategy and the UCLeeds Annual Review 2022-23 among other evidence sources.

346. The assessment team reviewed LEG's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy which outlines its commitment to creating and maintaining an inclusive working and learning environment that respects and celebrates difference. The policy relates to curriculum, teaching and learning and supporting learners and learner voice alongside employment and external partners. The implementation of the policy is overseen and monitored by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee as part of its purpose to actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion. The committee also monitors equality data in relation to staff and students on a termly basis and agrees actions to address any identified inequalities. The assessment team viewed the minutes from the July 2022 meeting of the committee and identified discussion covering inclusive recruitment, updates against its objectives, mandatory training figures and decolonising the curriculum. All curriculum and professional services departments are expected to have an 'EDI champion'. According to the terms of reference, the purpose of the EDI champion role is to contribute to making a positive change within departments and to support the organisation in being an inclusive environment.

347. The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement is set out in LEG's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and is refenced within the 'Learning and Teaching Policy' and Higher Education Personal Tutoring Policy. The Higher Education Student Support Strategy discusses the Access and Participation Plan which sets out to deliver support and resources with the aim to improve success and progression, with a focus on considering the barriers to accessing support for students from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities.

348. The assessment team viewed the completed Equality Impact Assessment form for the Student Engagement Policy. The document includes a link to guidance advising when an Equality Impact Assessment is required and advises that the form should form part of any new policy or service. Any equality impact assessments are reviewed by the Equality Team to review prior to publishing. A change control page records when an impact assessment has been completed on strategy and policy documents.

349. The assessment team found that a 'student profile' section is included as part of the overarching Higher Education Annual Review report, which presents retention and progression data by gender and ethnicity. Recruitment data is included and is split by gender, ethnicity and disability. The Departmental Annual Review requires teams to analyse the data and identify any trends, issues and actions and, in some of the examples reviewed by the assessment team, contains a section dedicated to EDI. For example, the 2023-24 departmental annual review for Creative Arts articulated that the department had delivered workshops within the community for refugee groups and groups with physical and learning disabilities. It had also hosted a series of workshops for groups who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or of other minority sexualities and gender identities (LGBT+) group. The Foundation Degree Creative Hair and Media Make-up course offers a module engaging with cultural diversity and the impact on hair and make-up, which LEG cited had informed a collaborative research project developing skin charts for a range of skin tones.

350. The 2021-22 programme level annual review for Foundation Degree Game Development, Game Art and Game Programming cited an ongoing action for the programme team to improve recruitment of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and female students onto the

programme, through marketing and further sessions with LEG's further education provision, although the assessment team noted that specific detail on the implementation of the action was limited. The team further noted that the latest version of the Programme Manager Annual Review document does not include a section dedicated to EDI, which the assessment team understand was in response to an evaluation of the annual review process in March 2023. The review indicated that there was duplication between the dedicated EDI and student profile data sections, with the latter having been expanded to include an analysis of student profile data and consideration of any trends and issues relating to the data. Though this observation did not impact on the assessment team's overall view that LEG's approach is guided by a commitment to equity, the assessment team considered that the EDI section had previously captured good practice and innovative interventions that had been undertaken at programme level.

351. The 2021-22 higher education annual review includes completion, progression and award by protected characteristics and an analytical commentary. The review includes performance against LEG's Access and Participation Plan targets and Graduate Outcomes data for White, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students. Recruitment and learning support data is presented by gender and ethnicity. The report also includes a section relating to equality and diversity that directs the reader to the student profile statistics.

352. LEG is currently developing a project plan for application to receive the Advance HE Race Equality Charter for Small and Specialist Institution Bronze in July 2025. The assessment team view this as good practice as it enables a focused approach designed to help institutions to identify and address barriers faced by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and students while also providing a framework for action and improvement.

353. The assessment team noted that equality, diversity and inclusion training is mandatory for all staff and is updated every three years. LEG has a Bullying and Harassment Policy, Promoting Positive Relationships and Supporting Behaviour Policy and a Hate Crime Policy.

354. Following the review of evidence, the assessment team concluded that LEG's approach is guided by a commitment to equality.

Conclusions

355. It is the assessment team's overall view that LEG has in place monitoring and evaluation arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The policies, annual reviews, student support information, validation process and other evidence sources reviewed by the assessment team confirm that student development is monitored and evaluated. The design of the programmes allows for students to develop their academic, professional and personal potential.

356. The assessment team also concluded that LEG has a comprehensive strategic and operational approach to evaluate how it enables student development and achievement for its diverse body of students. Student support has clear processes and ensures students have access to available support. Through scrutiny of the induction process, the assessment team concluded that students are advised about, and inducted into, their programmes in an effective way. The assessment team is satisfied that LEG provides opportunities for all students to develop skills that enable their academic, personal and professional progression,

through initiatives such as the Personal Tutoring Policy, Graduate Schemes and Employability Week.

357. The assessment team further concluded that LEG's approach is guided by a commitment to equity as demonstrated through equality, diversity and inclusion being embedded beyond the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and into the Higher Education Student Support Strategy and the Learning and Teaching Policy.

358. The assessment team formed the overall view that LEG has in place, monitors and evaluates arrangements and resources that enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Assessment of DAPs criterion E: Evaluation of performance

Criterion E1: Evaluation of performance

Advice to the OfS

359. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion E1: Evaluation of performance because it meets the requirements for this criterion.

360. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows in summary that LEG critically reviews its own performance through internal and external monitoring and review and has robust mechanisms in place to for disseminating good practice. Furthermore, LEG ensures that actions arising from self-evaluation, scrutiny and monitoring are timely and effectively discharged.

361. The view is based on specific consideration of the evidence requirements for this criterion, alongside 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

362. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets criterion E1 because it takes effective action to assess its own performance, respond to identified weaknesses and develop further its strengths.

363. The assessment team's view is based on its review of evidence which shows that LEG has met the evidence requirements for E1 and any other relevant evidence.

Reasoning

364. To inform the assessment team's consideration that critical self-assessment is integral to the operation of LEG's higher education provision and that action is taken in response to matters raised through internal or external monitoring and review, the assessment team considered a range of evidence from 2018-19 to 2023-24 including terms of reference for the UCLeeds Board and Academic Board, the annual reporting schedule for the UCLeeds Board, minutes from meetings of the Academic Board, Programme Managers and Annual Planning Event, student engagement and annual review reports.

365. The UCLeeds Board has oversight of the operation of UCLeeds and monitors compliance with the OfS conditions of registration on behalf of the Group Board. The UCLeeds Board Annual Reporting Schedule details internal monitoring points across three meetings in the year. The items of business include, for example, a review of the risk register, results of the NSS, an update on student enrolment, an overview of the UCLeeds operating budget, annual and mid-year monitoring reports covering feedback from the Academic Board, complaints and student data, an update on the implementation of the new higher education student information system.

366. The Higher Education Academic Board Terms of Reference include the formulation and recommendation of the academic strategy for the higher education provision to the Group Board and the responsibility to oversee its implementation. The Academic Board is also responsible for maintaining academic standards and to approve, modify, monitor and review performance. A copy of the minutes from a meeting of the Academic Board in July 2022 evidenced critical self-assessment through monitoring and evaluation of retention and predicted achievement alongside an applications report informing members of progress against student number targets. The minutes also detail a deliberation of the National Student Survey results, including contributions from a student representative present at the meeting, demonstrating student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement.

367. The terms of reference for the Programme Manager meeting state that it is the operational meeting for the whole of LEG's higher education provision, with "a focus on quality and enhancement, of all aspects of the learning cycle". The membership includes programme managers and representatives from support departments across UCLeeds and is chaired by the Director of Higher Education Quality and Standards. The assessment team formed the view that this broad representation of staff is appropriate and ensures that views on quality assurance and enhancement are captured from both curriculum and service colleagues to inform self-assessment activities. A copy of the minutes from a meeting in September 2023 details critical self-assessment within the operational meeting. For example, the annual review process and template is discussed with an action point for all to consider any changes prior to the commencement of the review cycle. The minutes of the Heads of Department Meeting in May 2023 include critical self-assessment of the operational annual review process, highlighting changes to facilitate a greater focus on sharing practice and future planning. The minutes also highlight changes to the annual review process, including a move from individual presentations to summary group presentations to highlight areas of good practice across departments. To evidence action taken in response to matters raised through internal monitoring the assessment team reviewed the minutes from the most recent Annual Planning event in July 2023. The minutes detail that the programme team proposed changes to how tasks were assessed on four modules delivered on the LLB (Hons) Law Level 4 and Level 5 modules. The Chair (the Dean of Higher Education) challenged the rationale behind the proposed change of assessment method and queried the impact on students and prospective career roles. The course team reassured the panel that students had been consulted, citing that 87 per cent of students were in agreement with the proposed changes. The proposal was given provisional agreement, subject to the external examiner approving the change.

368. A critical component to LEG's self-assessment is the role of the Award Committee. The Award Committee meetings are convened at course level and occur in November, March and June in each academic year. Membership includes student representatives and module tutors. The Award Committee Meeting agenda is staggered over the three meeting points and as appropriate to the time of year. They include a review of achievement, retention and success data over a three-year period. During the course of the year, the committee reviews the National Student Survey results, destination data and good practice in modules and assessment via a summary of actions from Annual Planning and Monitoring Events. The committee also considers any proposed modifications to modules and reviews the previous year's modifications, including feedback on the effectiveness of the change. It also reviews external examiner reports and actions and PSRB reports. The committee reviews applications

received, offers made and acceptances relative to targets over a three-year period, including (where relevant) trends for international student admissions. It considers the induction checklist, resource availability, sustainability and future needs. Tutor and student feedback is also considered through a summary of module evaluations, module results and any arising action plans. Through the committee, equality and diversity issues relating to course delivery are identified and actioned. The minutes from the Award Committee for Biomedical Science in March 2023 reference enhanced monitoring of the achievement of male students, which in the previous year was low. The minutes reference focused work with male students within the cohort to improve attendance, assessment submissions and attainment. Similarly, minutes of the Award Committee for Business, Enterprise and Management in December 2021 include actions to encourage students to declare issues such as poor mental health to enable timely intervention and support. The committee also considers course and module handbooks, student destinations, the higher education calendar and confirms arrangements for moderation and assessment briefs, re-assessment, deadlines for exam committees and boards and tracks extensions.

369. LEG uses student representatives to understand the experience of students on their courses. Student engagement is critical to self-assessment in the operation of LEG's higher education provision and that action is taken in response to matters raised through student voice. The assessment team reviewed the Student Engagement Policy which states a commitment to ensuring that there are mechanisms in place for the management of quality and standards through student engagement and partnership. The policy states that students will have formal opportunities in a range of quality assurance and enhancement activities, including module and programme evaluation and review and representation on committees, boards and working groups. This approach was found to be evident within the terms of reference for both the Academic Board and the UCLeeds Board, which include membership from the students' union. The assessment team reviewed evidence of feedback being gathered by students through course committee and student representative meetings, including evidence that the feedback had been actioned upon and received positively by students. Student voice was strengthened further through the introduction of a new role of Higher Education Student Engagement Officer in 2019 to further enhance the sense of community and partnership within the student body, and to provide dedicated support to student representatives.

370. LEG's Higher Education Annual Review process is a critical self-assessment which is integral to the operation of its higher education provision. Action is taken in response to matters raised through the monitoring and review of the year, evaluating trends and issues at department and institutional levels. Progress against actions is monitored and acted upon. For example, performance is monitored against the Access and Participation Plan. Data is included at UCLeeds level; however, it was noted that providing accurate data to enable staff to monitor the data at programme level would be beneficial. In 2022-23 this was implemented. The Presentation of Annual Review and Data agenda and minutes evidence discussion and critical self-assessment of curriculum areas.

371. The assessment team considered that LEG evidences critical self-assessments through external monitoring and review, such as the College of Sanctuary and the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers (NNECL) Quality Mark. The NNECL is a developmental change management process that demonstrates support for the inclusion and success of care experienced students. To gain the Quality Mark, the institutional self-assessment uses a framework which requires continuous improvement plans.

372. The assessment team concluded that LEG has critical self-assessment which is integral to the operation of its higher education provision and that action is taken in response to matters raised through internal or external monitoring and review.

373. To determine if clear mechanisms exist for assigning and discharging action in relation to the scrutiny and monitoring of its academic provision, the assessment team viewed examples of documentation relating to course validation, annual review, the Academic Board and external examiner reports.

374. The minutes of meetings of the Academic Board identify actions arising from discussion which are then summarised and assigned to the relevant individual or group in a table at the end of the document. In the following meeting, actions from the minutes are considered, and either confirmed as being completed or noted as pending or ongoing. For example, in the meeting on 24 October 2023, it was noted that all actions from the preceding meeting were complete, with one action pending relating to apprenticeship numbers. This approach was not however consistently evident; for example, there is no reference to actions from the preceding meeting of the Academic Board in the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2023. However, the assessment team identified that the process of identifying and recording actions is consistent, and therefore the assessment team considered that the instance above is therefore likely attributable to an administrative error.

375. Successful course validations result in a range of recommendations which must be considered by course teams prior to full approval being granted. The response document to validation of the Foundation Degree Healthcare Assistant Practitioner in May 2022 details the recommendations made by the validation panel, the action taken, and where appropriate references to validation documentation where changes had been made. An additional column then tracked whether the condition had been met to enable the course to be recommended for validation. This illustrates that actions arising from course approval are systematically addressed and considered.

376. The assessment team reviewed 12 annual external examiner reports and responses from academic years 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. For example, the assessment team reviewed the 2022-23 external examiner report for Foundation Degree Biomedical Science which noted concerns regarding the consistency and level of detail provided to students on how they can improve for future work. The report also queried how effectively students were supported in preparing for examinations. The course manager subsequently identified actions in the response to the external examiner report which included standardisation of feedback across the team, activities to encourage students to engage in feedback, and an enhanced use of Turnitin to provide more detailed feedback. In relation to the external examiner feedback on student preparation for examinations, the course manager confirmed that revision sessions and mock examinations were in place as appropriate opportunities to support students. In summary, it is the view of the assessment team that the feedback on academic standards provided by external examiners is acted upon, thus demonstrating that there are clear mechanisms for assigning and discharging action in relation to the scrutiny and review of provision.

377. In summary, the assessment team formed the view that LEG has clear mechanisms for assigning and discharging action in relation to the scrutiny and monitoring of its academic provision.

378. The assessment team found that ideas and expertise from within and outside the organisation (for example on programme design and development, on teaching, and on student learning and assessment) are drawn into its arrangements for programme design, approval, delivery and review.

379. External advisors are consulted during the course validation process to ensure that academic and industry input is secured in the development of provision. The minutes of the validation meeting for the Foundation Degree Film and Screen Media in May 2023, confirm input from an external academic and a freelance producer. The minutes demonstrate strong engagement from both externals in testing the proposals set out by the course team, including matters relating to industry relevance, employability, and the development of core academic skills within the course.

380. Programme Managers undertake a critical annual review of courses each year, incorporating feedback from relevant stakeholders. The Annual Review for 2021-22 for Biomedical Sciences summarises feedback from students, the external examiner, and employers, and sets appropriate actions in response to the issues raised.

381. LEG's critical self-assessment is integral to the operation of its higher education provision and action is taken in response to matters raised by external examiners. Annual external examiner reports are monitored by the Academic Board via an overview report.

382. LEG, and UCLeeds as a member organisation, are also represented on a range of employer groups, local authority working groups, and national higher education forums such as the Advance HE college-based higher education network group, QAA college higher education policy and practice network, and the Mixed Economy Group. These all provide opportunities to enable colleagues at LEG to network and consider external viewpoints to inform the management of higher education provision.

383. The assessment team concluded that LEG ensures that ideas and expertise from within and outside the organisation (for example on programme design and development, on teaching, and on student learning and assessment) are drawn into its arrangements for programme design, approval, delivery and review.

Conclusions

384. The assessment team concluded that LEG takes effective action to assess its own performance, respond to identified weaknesses and develop further its strengths.

Assessment of overarching criterion for the authorisation for DAPs

Full DAPs: A self-critical, cohesive academic community with a proven commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective quality systems.

Advice to the OfS

385. The assessment team's view is that LEG meets the DAPs overarching criterion because it meets all the underpinning criteria.

386. The assessment team's view is based on its review of the evidence which shows in summary that LEG demonstrates a self-critical and cohesive academic community. It has a proven commitment to the assurance of standards, which is supported by robust and effective quality systems.

387. This view is based on consideration of the evidence requirements for the DAPs criteria submitted by LEG for the purposes of this DAPs variation assessment, alongside other relevant information.

Reasoning

388. The assessment team found that self-criticality is demonstrated through LEG's monitoring and evaluation arrangements. For example, the processes involved in validating new curriculum, review of regulations, policies and procedures are, in the team's view, comparable with higher education providers in the sector. It takes effective action to assess its own performance through discussions and decisions made at the Group Board, UCLeeds Board, Academic Board and supporting committees. Employer and industry insights are included in course design, curriculum delivery and work experience opportunities to ensure that students are ready for employment on their graduation. Student feedback is actively elicited, considered and acted upon to inform and improve the content and delivery of the academic experience on its higher education courses.

389. LEG is committed to a firm assurance of academic standards through its academic regulations which are applied consistently, with assurance from exam boards and Chief External Examiner reports. LEG has robust mechanisms for setting and maintaining academic standards through annual review, course approval, periodic review and qualification award procedures. Staff are recruited appropriately and supported via performance reviews, a curated staff development programme, research opportunities and feedback via teaching observations to ensure delivery of high quality teaching, learning and assessment.

390. The assessment team considers the effectiveness of LEG's quality systems as proven, including through evidence of its programme design, approval and review procedures, which are subject to scrutiny by prospective employers, students and external higher education professionals. LEG has demonstrated its ability to design and deliver coherent courses and qualifications that meet threshold academic standards.

Conclusions

391. The team therefore concluded that LEG meets the overarching DAPs criterion as the evidence demonstrates that it has a self-critical, cohesive academic community with a proven commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective quality systems.

Annex A: Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
AI	artificial intelligence
CEO	chief executive officer
CPD	continuing professional development
DAPs	degree awarding powers
DELTAR	Developing Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Research (staff CPD programme)
DBS	Disclosure Barring Service
EDI	equality, diversity and inclusion
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FHEQ	Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEDO	Higher Education Development Office
HERA	Higher Education and Research Act 2017
HTQs	Higher Technical Qualifications
LCCG	Leeds City College Group
LTO	'learning through observation' [scheme]
LEG	Luminate Education Group
NNECL	National Network for the Education of Care Leavers
NSS	National Student Survey
OfS	Office for Students
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PSRB	Professional Statutory Regulatory Body
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QAC	[OfS's] Quality Assessment Committee
RPL	Record of Prior Learning
SIS	Student Information System
SPA	Strategic Planning Approval
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
VLE	virtual learning environment