Quality assessment report

Computing courses at Goldsmiths' College

January 2023 – April 2023

Contents

Summary

Each year, the Office for Students (OfS) selects a number of providers for investigation based on regulatory intelligence including, but not limited to, student outcomes and experience data and relevant notifications. As part of these investigations, the OfS may commission an assessment team, including external academic experts, to undertake an assessment of quality. The quality assessment focuses on areas of potential concern indicated by the data or other regulatory intelligence, or by information obtained by the assessment team as part of the assessment.

The assessment involves a visit to a provider, after which the assessment team produces a report. This report represents the conclusions of the team as a result of its consideration of information gathered during the course of the assessment to 26 April 2023. The report does not take into account matters which may have occurred subsequent to that period.

In line with the risk-based approach of the OfS, the assessment team does not undertake a comprehensive quality assessment in respect of every requirement in each condition of registration, and therefore this report should not be read as the team having undertaken such an assessment.

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

1. The OfS requires all registered higher education providers' courses to meet a minimum set of requirements or conditions that relate to quality and standards. The detailed requirements of these conditions can be found in the OfS's regulatory framework.[1] As a result of the OfS's general monitoring in December 2022 the OfS decided to open an investigation into the quality of computing courses provided by Goldsmiths' College.

2. Goldsmiths' College offers computing courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels at its campus in New Cross, south-east London.

3. The OfS appointed an assessment team on 22 December 2022, which consisted of three academic expert assessors and a member of OfS staff. The team were asked to give their advice and judgements about the quality of Goldsmiths' College's computing courses.

4. The team considered a range of information. This included:

    - information already held by the OfS, such as data relating to student outcomes

    - information submitted to the OfS by Goldsmiths' College, including about student attendance and achievement

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[1] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/securing-student-success-regulatory-framework-for-higher-education-in-england/.

- modules and other student and staff facing pages on Goldsmiths' College's virtual learning environment (VLE).

5. The team visited Goldsmiths' College on two occasions in March 2023 during which time it met with staff and students and had a guided tour of campus facilities.

6. During the assessment process, the team developed lines of enquiry. These focused on areas that potentially warranted further investigation and that were within the scope of ongoing conditions of registration:

   - B1: Academic experience

   - B2: Resources, support and student engagement

   - B4: Assessment and awards.

7. The lines of enquiry were developed and updated between the two visits and both versions were shared with Goldsmiths' College. This process followed the OfS's risk-based approach.

8. The assessment team's investigation drew on multiple sources of information that are relevant to conditions B1, B2 and B4. The risk-based approach led the assessment team to consider a number of areas:

   - **Curriculum and course design**: The assessment team considered how the undergraduate computing courses are designed to ensure coherence. It also considered how each course provides sufficient academic challenge appropriate for the level at which it is taught, and enables students to develop relevant skills, including practical skills and professional competences.

   - **Delivery of course content**: The team reviewed how teaching staff are allocated to modules and are provided with sufficient support to succeed in their roles to ensure that courses are effectively delivered and provide sufficient academic challenge.

   - **Resources including staffing:** The assessment team sought further information about resources, including staffing. In particular, the team focused on resources available to undergraduate computing students.

   - **Student feedback**: The assessment team sought to understand what mechanisms for student feedback currently exist on undergraduate computing courses. The team also focused on how the computing department considers and responds to student feedback, and how related action is ensured.

   - **Academic support for technical aspects**: The assessment team sought and considered information in relation to academic support for students studying on undergraduate computing courses. The team focused on how students from a range of disciplines are supported to succeed, in particular in modules that include technical aspects such as programming.

   - **Assessment and feedback**: The assessment team reviewed information related to when and how students on undergraduate computing courses receive assessment feedback and how the provision of timely and adequate feedback is ensured. The team also

reviewed how assessment for undergraduate computing courses is designed to be at the appropriate level. It also reviewed how pass rates and other information are used to inform module review and development.

- **Attendance and engagement**: The assessment team sought information about how attendance and students' engagement with their studies is managed and how Goldsmiths' acts on related concerns. The team also focused on what interventions are available to support students with poor attendance and engagement in their studies and how these are communicated to students. In addition, the team sought information about how attendance and engagement with studies information is considered alongside academic achievement.

- **Entry requirements:** The assessment team considered how entry requirements vary across undergraduate computing courses. It considered how this information is used to inform the academic support required to meet the needs of the cohort, based on prior academic attainments and capability.

9. Following the risk-based approach, the assessment team did not identify any concerns relating to conditions B1: Academic experience, B2: Resources, support and student engagement, or B4: Assessment and awards from its review of this information.

Introduction and background

10. Each year, the OfS selects a number of higher education providers for investigation based on regulatory intelligence including, but not limited to, student outcomes and experience data and relevant notifications. As part of these investigations, the OfS may commission an assessment team, including external academic experts, to undertake an assessment of quality. The quality assessment focuses on areas of potential concern indicated by the data or other regulatory intelligence, or by information obtained by the team as part of the assessment.

11. The assessment involves a visit to a provider, after which the assessment team produces a report. In line with the risk-based approach of the OfS, the team does not undertake a comprehensive quality assessment in respect of every requirement in each condition of registration, and therefore this report should not be read as the team having undertaken such an assessment.

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

13. The OfS appointed a team in December 2022 to assess the quality of the computing courses provided by Goldsmiths' College (i.e. those courses delivered by Goldsmiths' College, excluding courses delivered by partner organisations and transnational education). The assessment included matters that fall within the scope of the OfS's conditions of registration that concern quality and standards (specifically, ongoing conditions B1, B2 and B4).[2] The scope of the assessment, the information considered, and the findings of the assessment team are summarised in this report.

14. This report represents the conclusions of the team as a result of its consideration of information gathered during the course of the assessment to 26 April 2023. The report does not take into account matters which may have occurred subsequent to that period.

15. The OfS decided to open this investigation as part of its approach to general monitoring and in the context of its decision to focus on the quality of computing courses. In opening the investigation, the OfS had regard to information it held relating to Goldsmiths' College, including student outcomes data, numbers of students, and any notifications received.

Context

16. Computing courses at Goldsmiths' College are delivered at its campus in New Cross, south-east London. Goldsmiths' College offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate computing courses, many of which combine computing and creative arts. This is a direction that staff describe as a 'conscious choice' for Goldsmiths' to 'do something different'. In view of this, though many of the courses sit within the computing department, staff from other schools and departments are often involved in the design and delivery of the courses. As well as courses that combine creative arts and computing, the computing department also offers

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[2] See www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/regulation/registration-with-the-ofs-a-guide/conditions-of-registration/.

undergraduate courses such as BSc Computer Science and BSc Computing and postgraduate courses such as MSc Data Science.

17. Some courses are also offered as an integrated degree which includes a foundation year. These are BSc Computer Science, BSc Creative Computing, BSc Business Computing and Entrepreneurship, BSc Computing and BSc Games Programming.

18. For overall context, based on the latest available OfS 'Size and shape of provision data dashboard', in 2021-22 Goldsmiths' College had a student population (including students both taught or registered by Goldsmiths') of 9,870 students (headcount).[3] This included 5,610 full-time and part-time students studying at first degree level. It also included 4,150 full-time and part-time postgraduate students. The remaining students were enrolled on other undergraduate courses.

19. According to data provided by Goldsmiths' College on 4 January 2023, there were 1,225 students (headcount) enrolled on computing courses at Goldsmiths' College in the 2022-23 academic year. At undergraduate level, the largest number of students were enrolled on BSc Computer Science (270) and BSc Computer Science integrated degree (112). At postgraduate level, the largest number of students were enrolled on MSc User Experience Engineering (157) and MA Computer Games: Art and Design (62).

20. There is a range of student support at the New Cross campus, including library services in the Rutherford Building and a 'tech office' in Hatcham House to provide student and staff technical support, equipment loans and bookings. Further facilities available to students include user experience engineering laboratories and facilities, digital fabrication facilities, and a sonic immersive media laboratory. Professional support services have recently been centralised as part of the 'Professional Services Blueprint' being led by the Chief Operating Officer. The intention is to deliver 'streamlined, uniform services supported by systems'.

21. At the start of the 2022-23 academic year, Goldsmiths' College launched a single IT system for recording student attendance (SEAtS), a system designed to enable students to register attendance at timetabled sessions. Prior to the 2022-23 academic year, each academic department had its own system for recording and monitoring student attendance. The computing department also uses information gathered from the VLE to monitor attendance and students' engagement with their studies.

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[3] Source: Data from the 'all students' population from the OfS size and shape of provision data dashboard, as published on 12 April 2023.

Assessment process

Information gathering

22. The assessment team gathered a range of information to determine whether there are possible concerns relating to requirements set out in conditions of registration B1, B2 and/or B4. The team gathered information through an initial request for data from Goldsmiths' College (7 December 2022) and two site visits on 3 March 2023 and 23 to 24 March 2023.

23. During these visits it undertook:

    - a range of staff interviews (with academic and central college professional service staff)

    - a range of student panel interviews (including students studying at Levels 4 to 8)

    - observation of teaching

    - a physical facilities tour

    - a review of records and documents.

24. The team was also granted access to the VLE from 3 March 2023 to 22 May 2023. It made further requests for information and data based on discussions with staff and students during both the initial site visit and subsequent two-day site visit, and its analysis of information already provided. Goldsmiths' College fulfilled all requests in a timely fashion and provided the additional information and data requested on 23 February 2023, 21 March 2023 and 26 April 2023. Goldsmiths' College also chose to submit an additional briefing note for the team on 28 February 2023.

25. The team first reviewed general monitoring intelligence, including student outcomes data held by the OfS, and initial information provided by Goldsmiths' College. From this it identified broad areas for further analysis within the scope of conditions B1, B2 and/or B4, which in the team's view of the initial information raised questions or potential issues that the team determined to focus on. These areas were then communicated to the college and updated, where relevant, as the assessment progressed to ensure transparency with Goldsmiths' College.

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

Condition B1: Academic experience

26. The assessment team reviewed a range of evidence relevant to condition B1 (see Annex A for the full text of the condition) in seeking to understand whether students on Goldsmiths' College's computing courses have received a 'high quality academic experience', including that the relevant courses are 'up-to-date' (B1.3.a), provide 'educational challenge' (B1.3.b), are 'coherent' (B1.3.c), are 'effectively delivered' (B1.3.d) and require 'students to develop relevant skills' (B1.3.e).

27. The initial information provided by Goldsmiths' College, and reviewed by the assessment team, included:

    - course and module specifications for the relevant courses across Levels 3 to 8

    - programme handbooks for the relevant courses across Levels 3 to 8

    - module attainment data for Level 4 modules on the relevant courses (for the academic year 2021-22)

    - any student complaints and their outcomes (during the academic year 2021-22).

28. Alongside the initial information provided by Goldsmiths' College, the assessment team reviewed National Student Survey (NSS) information for 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, both quantitative and qualitative, and student outcomes data including measures on completion, continuation and progression.

29. This initial information is relevant to the courses under consideration being 'up-to-date', providing 'educational challenge', being 'coherent' and requiring 'students to develop relevant skills'.

30. During onsite visits, the assessment team met with students currently studying computing courses across Levels 3 to 8, with academic staff teaching on these courses, with members of the leadership team for the computing school and with professional services staff. These meetings included discussions of topics relevant to courses being 'up-to-date', providing 'educational challenge', being 'coherent', being 'effectively delivered' and requiring 'students to develop relevant skills'.

31. The assessment team requested additional information from Goldsmiths' College regarding the courses being considered, as detailed under 'information gathering' above (all data noted below was supplied by the college). This included:

    - aggregate attainment data for modules delivered as part of a selection of undergraduate computing courses (delivered between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2022)

    - external examiner reports and associated provider responses for all undergraduate computing courses (delivered between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022)

- minutes of staff-student committee meetings with students on computing courses (held between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2022)

- Department Development Plans (DDPs) for the computing department (for 2020-21 and 2021-22)

- Student Module Evaluation Report Forms (SMERFs) for undergraduate computing modules (most recent version for each module)

- a list of optional modules for BSc Digital Arts Computing for the second academic year of study.

32. The information is relevant to all aspects of condition B1.3., that students receive a 'high quality academic experience'.

33. The assessment team reviewed module VLE sites, including samples of teaching resources, guidance to students, and organisation of the sites themselves. This information is particularly relevant to courses being 'up-to-date' (B1.3a), 'coherent' (B1.3.c) and 'effectively delivered' (B1.3.d).

34. The assessment team's assessment drew on multiple sources of information, as identified above, that are relevant to condition B1. Following a risk-based approach, the assessment team considered a number of areas as set out below.

Curriculum and course design

35. The assessment team considered how the undergraduate computing courses are designed to ensure coherence. It also considered how each course provides sufficient academic challenge appropriate for the level at which it is taught, and enables students to develop relevant skills, including practical skills and professional competences.

36. The team decided to consider this area following a review of student feedback submitted to the NSS where the team noted that some students had raised concerns about the coherence of their courses. Further, a review of a range of the undergraduate module specifications initially suggested a lack of explicit pre-requisite requirements between modules (to allow a student to start one module after completing another). This may have resulted in students not being required to achieve outcomes in modules that would ensure they have obtained the right skills and knowledge to succeed in subsequent modules.

37. The assessment team reviewed the course content provided on the VLE for most undergraduate computing modules, including pre-recorded lecture content (where applicable), lecture-capture (where available), uploaded lectures slides, and other supplementary materials.

38. The team sought further information about modules containing a strong mathematical or theoretical component. This had been highlighted by student representatives during the first visit as an area that was particularly challenging for a lot of their peers. The team focused on the coherence and level of educational challenge when reviewing the information gathered.

39. Further, the team considered the module options available to students, and in particular the coherence of the different pathways. The team also considered the level of educational

challenge present in modules with a large introductory programming component at Levels 4 and 5.

40. Some students on the BSc Digital Arts Computing and BSc Creative Computing courses told the team during the first visit that they were not provided with appropriate academic challenge to equip them with the necessary and relevant 'coding skills [to] support [their] creative practice'. In particular, they raised concerns about the use of libraries or frameworks (such as p5.js and openFrameworks) in some core programming modules. These provide students with additional pre-packaged code and routines, so that students do not need to implement them themselves. Some students suggested that the use of these libraries or frameworks did not give them a sufficiently deep understanding of programming. The concern was that this didn't allow them to develop relevant skills necessary to succeed in the industries in which they hoped to work following completion of their courses.

41. The team explored these issues through further detailed review of the following features:

    - the process by which the curriculum is reviewed and developed

    - the choice of core programming languages that are taught and the progression of these across the different levels of the course, and in particular the use of open libraries and frameworks utilised across Levels 4 and 5

    - the combination of course materials available through the VLE, including multiple short pre-recorded video lectures, lecturer-capture, slides, and other supplementary materials.

42. Through the relevant information viewed and the verbal responses received in meetings with staff and students in relation to these features, the team was satisfied that all key concepts are introduced at the appropriate points in the course. This included the introduction of key concepts both within modules and between modules. The team was also satisfied that the introduction of key concepts formed a logical and coherent progression.

43. The team also heard from Level 6 students who praised the department's 'module fair' where students were able to attend an event to find out about the optional modules and discuss them with the lecturer. Students told the team that this was an effective process in assisting them to choose their optional modules. They reported that it helped them to form a coherent programme of study that equips them with the relevant skills appropriate for their career plans.

44. The assessment team also considered in detail the coherence and level of educational challenge present in modules with a large introductory programming component at Levels 4 and 5. The team was satisfied with the design of the modules, the choices of programming languages, and the libraries or frameworks utilised. The progression of programming languages from Python to Javascript to C++ among the core modules taught in Levels 3, 4 and 5 is introduced in a coherent manner, while allowing students to develop and extend their range of skills. The team found evidence of coherent course design in Level 5 modules, which highlighted the similarities and differences between content that students had learned in Level 4 and newly introduced content.

45. The assessment team was satisfied that all the Level 4 modules with a strong mathematical or theoretical component provided the appropriate level of educational challenge and were suitable for all cohorts of students enrolled on the course irrespective of their educational

background. The team was satisfied that the Level 5 modules with a strong mathematical or theoretical component also provided an appropriate level of educational challenge, building upon the skills developed in Level 4 in a coherent manner.

46. Considering this information, the assessment team was satisfied that the structured approach to modules in Levels 4 and 5 within each pathway ensured coherence in undergraduate computing courses.

47. The comments from students relating to appropriate academic challenge and equipping them with the necessary skills were considered by the team in the context of what can reasonably be achieved in multi-disciplinary courses such as these. In these types of multi-disciplinary courses, in contrast with the Computer Science and Computing courses, students' available time is necessarily divided among disciplines.

48. On balance, having reviewed the course content on the VLE, the assessment team considered that the design of these modules and the decision to utilise libraries or frameworks (such as p5.js and openFrameworks) did not dilute the level of academic challenge present in these modules. The team was satisfied that the core programming concepts were not overlooked through the use of these libraries or frameworks.

49. The assessment team was reassured that the libraries and frameworks that are utilised are covered under permissive open-source licences. These remain free to use and permit students to continue to use these tools in their work after they graduate. This ensures that the skills obtained by students remain transferrable and relevant after completion of their courses.

50. The team's review of course materials provided to students through the VLE provided further reassurance that the curriculum offered sufficient academic challenge appropriate for the level.

51. Following its review of the relevant information, and discussions with students and staff, the assessment team did not identify any concerns in respect of curriculum and course design.

Delivery of course content

52. The team reviewed how teaching staff are allocated to modules and are provided with sufficient support to succeed in their roles to ensure that courses are effectively delivered and provide sufficient academic challenge.

53. The team decided to review this area because it considered there to be a large number of courses offered by the provider and, in particular, a large number of cross-disciplinary courses. The team considered that this may have an impact on course delivery where core modules are shared between different cohorts of students, with possibly differing educational backgrounds and motivations. The team also noted that some responses in the reviewed NSS data allege instances of teaching staff being allocated to modules with little notice or preparation.

54. Through discussions with staff and a review of supporting documents, the assessment team was reassured by the organisational structure within the department. Ownership of each programme was delegated to a programme lead, who was responsible for the oversight of each of the undergraduate computing courses as a whole.

55. The assessment team heard from staff members and the Head of Department about the process by which modules are allocated to teaching staff. The team also heard how the

curriculum is reviewed and developed, and how assessment deadlines are set and confirmed through a departmental meeting prior to the start of each academic year. This included senior departmental staff running focus groups to discover the particular interests of teaching staff developing from their own research and expertise. The team also heard about how teaching teams meet before the start of the academic year to consider the skills split of teaching staff across modules. This combination of collegial organisation and oversight by programme leads appears to have contributed to the effective delivery of the programmes offered.

56. The assessment team was satisfied that the provider had a reasonable process in place to ensure that modules were allocated to teaching staff in a way that capitalised on their expertise and subject-specific knowledge. The team was satisfied that this was working in practice because it did not see or hear of any examples of current modules being taught by teaching staff outside their expertise and because teaching staff also told the team that this was their experience. The assessment team was also reassured by the arrangement for multi-disciplinary modules, such as those on the BSc Creative Computing and BSc Digital Arts Computing courses, to be co-taught by members of teaching staff from both relevant departments.

57. In relation to NSS comments that suggested instances of teaching staff being allocated to modules with little notice or preparation, the assessment team did not observe any evidence of this. These comments may refer to isolated and historical incidents during the period of disruption during the coronavirus pandemic. The processes in place to recruit temporary teaching stuff (to ensure that modules are unaffected by staff absences and vacancies) appear to be a reasonable mitigation to ensure the effective delivery of course content.

58. Following its review of the relevant information, and discussions with staff as identified above, the assessment team did not identify any concerns in respect of delivery of course content.

B1 Conclusions

59. The assessment team's investigation drew on multiple sources of information, as identified above, that are relevant to condition B1. Following a risk-based approach, it did not identify any concerns relating to condition B1 from reviewing this information.

Condition B2: Resources, support and student engagement

60. The assessment team reviewed a range of evidence relevant to condition B2 (see Annex A for the full text of the condition) in seeking to understand whether Goldsmiths' College has taken all reasonable steps to ensure that each cohort of students registered on the relevant courses is receiving 'resources and support' (B2.2.a). These resources and support should be sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students, and enabling those students to succeed in and beyond higher education. In addition, the assessment team sought to understand whether Goldsmiths' College has taken all reasonable steps to ensure 'effective engagement' (B2.2.b) with each cohort of students registered on the relevant courses. This should be sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students, and enabling those students to succeed in and beyond higher education.

61. The initial information provided by Goldsmiths' College that was reviewed by the assessment team included:

- programme handbooks for the relevant courses across Levels 3 to 8

- information provided to students at the beginning of each academic year, which sets out Goldsmiths' College's approach to the provision of physical and digital learning resources

- information provided to students at the beginning of each academic year, which sets out Goldsmiths' College's approach to the provision of support to students and how students may access that support

- any student complaints and their outcomes (during the academic year 2021-22).

62. Alongside the initial information provided by Goldsmiths' College, the assessment team reviewed NSS information for 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, both quantitative and qualitative, and student outcomes data including measures on completion, continuation and progression.

63. This initial information is relevant to Goldsmiths' College taking all reasonable steps to ensure that students on relevant courses are receiving sufficient 'resources and support', and to ensure 'effective engagement' with these students.

64. During onsite visits, the assessment team met with academic teaching staff, wider computing school support staff and members of the leadership team. These meetings included discussion of topics relevant to students receiving 'resources and support' and opportunities for 'effective engagement'.

65. The team also met with students currently studying computing courses, across Levels 3 to 8. These meetings included discussion of topics relevant to students receiving 'resources and support' and opportunities for 'effective engagement'.

66. The assessment team requested additional information from Goldsmiths' College, as detailed under 'Information gathering' above (all data below was supplied by the college). This included:

- average rates of attendance data relating to Level 4 modules delivered as part of computing courses (delivered between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022)

- minutes of staff-student committee meetings with students on computing courses (held between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2022)

- DDPs for the computing department (for 2020-21 and 2021-22)

- NSS workshops action plans (September 2022 and November 2022)

- Head of Department student survey results (from 2021 and 2022)

- SMERFs for undergraduate computing modules (most recent version for each module).

67. This information is relevant to all aspects of condition B2.

68. The assessment team reviewed module VLE sites including in detail:

- C++ for creative practice

- Front-end web – final project

- Games project 1

- Sounds and signals 1

- Final project in creative computing

- Final year project in computational arts

- Big data applications.

69. The team's assessment drew on multiple sources of information, as identified above, that are relevant to condition B2. Following a risk-based approach, the assessment team considered a number of areas set out below.

Resources including staffing

70. The assessment team sought further information about resources, including staffing. In particular, the team focused on resources available to undergraduate computing students.

71. The assessment team decided to review further information in this area because it considered that the scores for questions related to learning resources in the NSS data results were relatively low.[4] Also, it noted the low completion and continuation rates might indicate that sufficient steps were not being taken to provide sufficient resources or support. There was a low completion rate of 72.2 per cent and a low continuation rate of 82.2 per cent (both of which were in the bottom quartile of sector performance).[5] Also, at the first onsite visit the team saw and heard about a number of postgraduate resources but less about the provision for undergraduates.

72. The assessment team was able to visit a number of physical spaces, including computer laboratories, research laboratories and demonstration areas. In addition, it was able to view the centralised library spaces, and hot-desk areas that were available for students to use. Goldsmiths' College and the department also provide access to loan equipment and technical support services. Members of the assessment team were also able to observe live laboratory teaching sessions and see how the module leader and teaching assistants worked together. The team's view was that the spaces and resources available to students were sufficient and

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[4] Source: OfS internal analysis of the student survey responses used to construct the experimental three-year average statistic by teaching provider for 2022 published at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss/nss-data-provider-level/, subset to students studying within the computing CAH11 subject area. It covered students surveyed in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

[5] Source: OfS published continuation and completion measures within the student outcomes dashboard from September 2022 using the 'Taught' view of a provider's student population for full-time first degree students, available at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-outcomes-data-dashboard/get-the-data/. The subject area is defined by the Common Aggregation Hierarchy Level 2 (CAH11). The measures are both aggregate across a four year time series. For continuation this was 2016-17 to 2019-20 inclusion, for completion this was 2013-14 to 2016-17 inclusive.

comparable to that provided in other institutions. The students who met with the team were also satisfied with the resources provided.

73. Information was obtained from departmental staff about the staff workload and overall workload modelling that was in operation in the department. The team sought information from staff about how modules were organised and managed. It was provided with clarification about the model used where module leaders report to programme leaders, with oversight by the Director of Teaching and the departmental management team. This process ensures that sufficient staff resources are allocated to each module each time that it is delivered. The team's view was that the staff teaching workload appeared to be appropriate and the team did not hear or see any information that would suggest otherwise. The team also heard from the Head of Department that they currently had a full staff complement and were able to attract additional specialist staff when the need arose. During recent years there has also been disruption caused by the coronavirus and industrial action. This has undoubtably impacted on the student experience. However, the assessment team's view is that, because the provider has an effective model of oversight of all the modules, it has taken steps to ensure that students have continued to receive the resources and support needed to maintain a high quality academic experience.

74. Following its review of relevant information, visits to physical spaces and further discussions with staff as outlined above, the assessment team did not identify any concerns in respect of the resources.

Student feedback

75. The assessment team sought to understand what mechanisms for student feedback currently exist for students on undergraduate computing courses. The team also focused on how the computing department considers and responds to student feedback, and how related action is ensured.

76. The team decided to seek further information in this area because the initial material provided by Goldsmiths' College showed some minutes of staff-student meetings were unavailable due to staff changeovers. Also, the NSS data showed that students had given higher scores in response to the question 'I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course' (82 per cent), than in response to the question 'It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on' (36 per cent).[6]

77. The assessment team heard from the computing department leadership team and teaching staff about how feedback on modules is gathered from students. It also reviewed examples of this on the VLE, where students are able to submit feedback for each of their modules via a SMERF. The team was satisfied that steps were being made to encourage students to complete the SMERFs and provide feedback on their modules, for example using time in scheduled contact sessions to ask students to complete the SMERF. Once the SMERFs are completed, the module convenors summarise the feedback received and outline any proposed action in response to it. This is posted back on the module's VLE page for transparency. The team also heard from students who felt informed about how feedback on modules is

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[6] Source: OfS internal analysis of the student survey responses used to construct the experimental three-year average statistic by teaching provider for 2022 published at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss/nss-data-provider-level/, subset to students studying within the computing CAH11 subject area. It covered students surveyed in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

considered. For example, one student told the team about a suggestion they had made about a change to a module, and although it wasn't implemented, the student advised that the lecturer had spoken to them to explain why.

78. Goldsmiths' supplied information to the assessment team that demonstrated the operation of termly staff-student forums. Further, the team heard from staff and students about the forums. The Director of Studies was responsible for chairing these meetings and reviewing the actions arising. The outcomes from these meetings are also reviewed by a 'Student success' office. The team also heard from staff and students about how information about actions taken as a result of staff and student forums are shared via the VLE. The Head of Department also provided evidence of a number of student surveys (three in the last two academic years), which have been carried out to gather additional information around specific issues.

79. The team sought further information about how the computing department ensured that students' feedback is responded to. The team heard from teaching and other staff that the Head of Department and Director of Undergraduate Studies took steps to check that relevant action had been taken and heard about examples where this had been done. These examples included making changes to include intermediary checkpoints and less bunching of deadlines, more practical coding experience being added to a specific module and, for another module, stopping the use of recorded content for in-person teaching. The team was reassured that the procedures in place did result in changes when necessary.

80. The team's view was that students are encouraged and provided with sufficient opportunities to provide feedback on their experiences and that steps have been taken to respond to any concerns raised.

81. Following its review of the relevant information and through discussions with computing department and teaching staff, as well as students, the assessment team did not identify any concerns in respect of student feedback.

Academic support for technical aspects

82. The assessment team sought and considered further information in relation to academic support for students studying on undergraduate computing courses. The team focused on how students from a range of disciplines are supported to succeed, in particular in modules that include technical aspects such as programming.

83. The team sought further information because of the wide range of courses and areas covered in the undergraduate computing courses and because both staff and students mentioned the diversity of the students and the challenges for some students with the mathematical and programming content. The team had also noted that academic support scores were also in the bottom quartile in the NSS results reviewed by the team.[7]

84. Course level outlines and detail on undergraduate computing modules on the VLE were reviewed to determine how students from a range of disciplines are supported to succeed, in

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[7] Source: OfS internal analysis of the student survey responses used to construct the experimental three-year average statistic by teaching provider for 2022 published at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss/nss-data-provider-level/, subset to students studying within the computing CAH11 subject area. It covered students surveyed in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

particular in those modules that included technical aspects such as programming. The assessment team was satisfied that, in its view, steps were being taken to support students from different backgrounds and with different levels of technical ability. For example, first year modules were explicitly designed to support students with a range of programming skills, with module tasks that were designed to allow students with different levels of programming knowledge to succeed. This ranges from no previous experience through to a considerable amount of programming experience.

85. In the first year of study, students are monitored after the first 5 weeks of term to check that they are on the most appropriate pathway. Induction notes are also supplied to first year students on all undergraduate computing courses, provide additional detail on the routes to support that are available. Also, several bootcamps and other training and support opportunities were organised, which particularly focused on providing additional programming and maths support. Bootcamps are mandatory for some students, such as the BA Journalism students. This reflects the different entry requirements for different courses (for example BSc Computer Science students require a 6 in GCSE maths, BA Journalism students require a 4 in GCSE maths). It also reflects the level of support the department identifies may be required for students from different disciplines and academic backgrounds. Some students are encouraged to take up these opportunities on an optional basis either before enrolment onto the course or at their termly meetings with their personal tutors or by the Director of Studies (when they review the progress of all students). The team heard from students that they found access to support very flexible, were aware of resources to support gaps in knowledge and found it easy to find things in the VLE because of the consistent approach to organising information.

86. The assessment team also saw that new pathways had been introduced and students' progress reviewed at an early stage to ensure they were on the most appropriate pathways for their skills and needs. For example, the BSc Computing course was introduced for students who found some of the mathematical elements of the BSc Computer Science more challenging. The BSc Computing course was first introduced in January 2022, and 30 current students from other computing courses at Goldsmiths' College switched to this course. Students are now advised about the level of mathematical content before they apply to ensure that they are on the correct programme, so there are now fewer students (three or four) switching courses each year. The department has recognised that students need greater flexibility in selecting the most appropriate pathways for them. This leads to better student outcomes and improved completion rates. The assessors heard that the department had worked with its students to devise more pathways and are introducing Business, Artificial Intelligence and Software Engineering pathways. Students will be able to move between pathways as they progress, up until halfway through the second year.

87. The team's view was that students are offered a range of pathways appropriate to their academic needs and provided with sufficient support to succeed. The team heard from departmental staff that projects form a substantial part of both Level 6 and Level 7. It also heard that a number of changes had been introduced to give greater academic support to students. These included changing the projects from purely a summer term activity to an activity to be worked on throughout the year. This gives students contact with their peers in the project group and the project supervisor throughout the year. Students commented that the relationship with the project supervisor was important, and the project supervisor was often the person whom they go to for academic support in the department. The team also heard from students that they were given good advice at the 'module fair' to support their choices of

optional modules in the final year. Further, the team heard from students that they recognised their peers often came from different artistic and computing backgrounds and that the theory elements in modules were balanced accordingly.

88. Following its review of the relevant information and discussions with staff and students about the pathways and support available to students, the assessment team did not identify any concerns in respect of academic support relating to how students from a range of disciplines are supported to succeed, in particular in modules that include technical aspects such as programming.

Assessment and feedback

89. The assessment team reviewed information related to when and how students on undergraduate computing courses receive assessment feedback and how the provision of timely and adequate feedback is ensured.

90. The team focused on this particular area following a review of student comments submitted to the NSS and in meetings with students during the first visit.[8] In these meetings students had raised concerns about the lateness of feedback and its quality. Furthermore, the team noted the relatively low assessment and feedback scores in NSS results in comparison to the average scores across the sector.[9]

91. The assessment team reviewed feedback given to students on the VLE, including both formative feedback given to students as part of their overall learning experience for a range of undergraduate computing modules, and summative guidance for assignments that were at the end of the module. The team further heard from students and staff that additional feedback was also given orally in lectures and laboratory classes. The team also considered information that demonstrated that the department was taking steps to ensure the timeliness of feedback. For example, there was a departmental policy to make it compulsory for staff to clearly state feedback deadlines for each module on the VLE. An all-staff workshop is carried out in the second week of the autumn term where assessment deadlines are discussed. Goldsmiths' College's guidelines specify a three to five week feedback timeline. For larger assignments the team saw that marking had been divided and shared between multiple markers in order to meet assessment deadlines. The assessment team also reviewed the use of online assignments, which were available on the VLE. The team reviewed a sample of the weekly quizzes, particularly for maths and programming modules, which provided instant scores and feedback to students. No concerns were identified with these. The team considered that, overall, the feedback timelines were appropriate. There are weekly pieces of work throughout the term getting instant feedback. Other courses were designed with several smaller pieces of work, which are each returned in time for the students to benefit from the feedback before the next piece of work is due.

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[8] Source: Student responses to the question 'Looking back on the experience, are there any particularly positive or negative aspects you would like to highlight?' of the NSS for students studying within the computing CAH11 subject area. It covered students surveyed in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

[9] Source: OfS internal analysis of the student survey responses used to construct the experimental three-year average statistic by teaching provider for 2022 published at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/student-information-and-data/national-student-survey-nss/nss-data-provider-level/, subset to students studying within the computing CAH11 subject area. It covered students surveyed in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022.

92. The computing department has very few formal exams and instead has substantial pieces of project work, which usually have a submission date after the module is completed with longer times for the return of feedback. In most of the cases the assessment team looked at the return dates for coursework are announced to students via the VLE. The assessors heard from the computing department and teaching staff that the return of coursework was monitored by the department and any delays brought to the attention of the Head of Department. When reviewing information on the VLE, the assessment team only saw a couple of examples of delayed feedback and is aware that these may have been affected by the marking boycott.

93. From a review of the feedback given to students on assignments via the VLE, the assessment team was satisfied that the information viewed suggested that feedback is given in a timely and appropriate manner.

94. Following its review of the relevant information and further discussions with staff as outlined above, the assessment team did not identify any concerns in respect of assessment and feedback.

Attendance and engagement

95. The assessment team sought information about how attendance and students' engagement with their studies is managed and how Goldsmiths' acts on related concerns. The team also focused on finding information on the interventions available to support students with poor attendance and engagement in their studies and how these are communicated to students. Further, the team sought information about how information about attendance and engagement with studies is considered alongside academic achievement.

96. The team sought further information in this area because it was told during the first visit that there was a new attendance monitoring system. This had replaced the department's original system and the team was told that it was not fully operational. Also, discussions with personal tutors suggested variations in approaches to the monitoring of student engagement with their studies. Further, from reviewing the department's module results it appeared that a number of students failed to complete their modules. For example, from data provided by the department on Level 4 Module 2021-22 outcomes, 30 per cent of students did not achieve an outcome on Computing project 1.

97. A centralised attendance monitoring system (SEAtS) was being used across Goldsmiths' College and students were reminded about the system during induction processes. Staff could also use the VLE to provide data on a student's engagement with their courses.

98. Each student was assigned a personal tutor and the expectation was that they would meet their tutor at least once a term. The team saw that this expectation was clearly set out for students in induction materials. A student could also ask for a '360 degree' individual review with their tutor and could also arrange to meet with one of the four senior tutors. Although the take-up for this was not high, the team considered that alongside other review systems in place, this was a reasonable approach to offering different types of support for students. The team heard from a range of staff members about the proactive role taken by the Director of Teaching, tutors and programme leaders. The director reviews each student's record of submission of assessed work and the marks gained. The director also reviews how often the student has accessed the VLE. The director identifies students with poor attendance and engagement with the VLE (less than 40 per cent), then asks either the programme director or

the student's tutor (as appropriate) to meet with the student to discuss their progress and additional support needs. The director also contacts any student who has not made contact with their personal tutor.

99. The DDPs are drawn up annually by staff in the department and, among other things, they address attainment and retention issues. The DDPs are reviewed and progress on actions is reported termly to the Departmental Learning and Teaching Committee. The DDPs are confirmed centrally at Goldsmiths' Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee and reviewed regularly by the Student Access, Participation and Outcomes subcommittee throughout the year. There are also regular undergraduate and postgraduate programme leader meetings (every one or two weeks) where attendance and engagement issues are discussed, and actions considered.

100. A number of modules use multiple choice questions (MCQ) assessments to provide instant feedback and a check that the students have understood the week's lectures. There is also quick feedback from computing tasks in practical classes, given directly to students at that time in-person. The assessment team heard from staff that both of these have been found to increase student engagement with their course and were also used in monitoring students' progress and engagement at an early stage. For example, the team heard that this year many of the quizzes have been completed in laboratory time and are supervised. This has enabled staff to have immediate contact with students who are struggling with the assessment.

101. The first year computing project module has moved from one final large piece of work to smaller weekly chunks of project work. Feedback is given within a week of submission and before completion of the next assessment is required. This has been found to increase student participation and improve outcomes from the module this year. The assessment team was told that students had previously struggled to complete the third-year computing project and they now have more intermediary checkpoints with smaller pieces of work to complete by the deadlines. The department also decided to change the project to run throughout the year in response to student feedback. From the data provided by the department we can see that in the most recent year the number of computer science students not continuing to the end of the project has reduced from 10 per cent to 4 per cent.

102. From a review of the student attendance system and how this is combined through various layers of academic support (module supervisors, personal tutors, senior tutors and the department management team) and the changes implemented in the computing project modules, the assessment team was satisfied that the computing department effectively manages student attendance and engagement with their courses. This management allows departmental staff to identify when students need additional academic support and to then provide this.

103. Following its review of the relevant information and further discussions with staff as outlined above, the assessment team did not identify any concerns in respect of how student attendance and engagement with their studies is managed and related concerns are acted on.

Entry requirements

104. The assessment team considered how entry requirements vary across undergraduate computing courses and how this information is used to inform the academic support required to meet the needs of the cohort (based on their prior academic attainments and capability).

105. The team decided to seek further information about this because of the relatively low levels of continuation and completion seen in data held by the OfS.[10] This included a completion rate of 72.2 per cent and a continuation rate of 82.2 per cent (both were in the bottom quartile of sector performance).[11]

106. There was evidence that Goldsmiths' College was offering several different pathways (through module choices) and courses that were tailored to students with different backgrounds and interests. For example, the BSc Computing course was designed around students who might have a lower level of mathematical knowledge and/or ability. A series of different pathways in BSc Computer Science were being offered to allow students to specialise, and which would determine the module choices available to them. For example, the team was told about the new pathway 'Computer Science with User Experience'. There was also evidence that the provider was taking steps to facilitate students moving between programmes, depending on the courses they were taking and their stages in the process.

107. From a review of the undergraduate computing programmes available, the team took the view that Goldsmiths' College was providing courses that could offer a high quality academic experience to students with different levels and areas of prior knowledge and meeting different entry requirements. The different courses were clearly designed for different cohorts of students. For example, the BSc Computing course was clearly targeted at students with a lower level of mathematics knowledge. Also, there were several different options for mixing arts and computing subjects. For example, the BSc Digital Arts Computing course had the least technical content (and more arts), whereas the BSc Creative Computing course provided opportunities for more technically able students, and the BSc Games Programming course was targeted at students who wanted to specialise in that field.

108. Further, as previously set out in this report, the team also considered the additional support options available to students and how these are targeted at students with different types of academic backgrounds. For example, as set out in paragraph 85, bootcamps that are held to support students with particular skills are mandatory for some students, depending on the entry requirements of that particular course. Where they are not mandatory, students who may require additional support can still participate on an optional basis.

109. From the review of the different courses and entry requirements and different undergraduate pathway options available (particularly for students who found the maths elements of some

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[10] Source: OfS internal analysis of the student data used to construct the published continuation and completion measures within the student outcomes dashboard from September 2022, subset to students taught at Goldsmiths College within the computing CAH11 subject area

[11] Source: OfS published continuation and completion measures within the student outcomes dashboard from September 2022 using the 'Taught' view of a provider's student population for full-time first degree students, available at https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/student-outcomes-data-dashboard/get-the-data/. The subject area is defined by the Common Aggregation Hierarchy Level 2 (CAH11). The measures are both aggregate across a four year time series. For continuation this was 2016-17 to 2019-20 inclusion, for completion this was 2013-14 to 2016-17 inclusive.

courses more challenging), the assessment team was satisfied that in their view steps have been taken to support students from a range of different disciplines and with different levels of prior attainment. The assessment team did not identify any concerns in respect of entry requirements.

B2 Conclusions

110. The assessment team's investigation drew on multiple sources of information, as identified above, that are relevant to condition B2. Following a risk-based approach, it did not identify any concerns relating to condition B2 from reviewing this information.

Condition B4: Assessment and awards

111. In the course of its investigation the assessment team reviewed a range of evidence relevant to condition B4 (see the full text in Annex A) in seeking to understand whether students on the relevant courses are 'assessed effectively' (B4.2.a), that each assessment is 'valid and reliable' (B4.2.b), that academic regulations 'are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible' (B4.2.c.) and that 'relevant awards granted to students are credible' (B4.2.e).

112. The initial information provided by Goldsmiths' College and reviewed by the assessment team included:

    - module specification for the relevant courses across Levels 3-8, including assessment methods

    - module attainment data for Level 4 modules on the relevant courses (for academic year 2021-22)

    - any student complaints (during the academic year 2021-22).

113. Alongside the initial information provided by Goldsmiths' College, the assessment team reviewed NSS information for 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22, both quantitative and qualitative, and student outcomes data including measures in completion, continuation and progression.

114. This initial information is relevant to students on the courses under consideration being 'assessed effectively' (B4.2.a) and assessments being 'reliable' (B4.2.b).

115. During onsite visits, the assessment team met with students currently studying the courses under consideration, across Levels 4 to 8, with academic staff teaching on these courses and with staff responsible for academic misconduct. These meetings included discussion of topics relevant to assessments being 'effective' (B4.2.a) and 'valid' (B4.2.b) (i.e. that assessments 'in fact take place in a way that results in students demonstrating knowledge and skills in the way intended by the design of the assessment').

116. The assessment team requested additional information from Goldsmiths' College, as detailed under 'Information gathering' above. This included:

- aggregate attainment data for modules delivered as part of a selection of undergraduate computing courses (delivered between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2022)

- external examiner reports and associated provider responses for all undergraduate computing courses (delivered between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022)

- data relating to recorded reasons for student withdrawals (for students enrolled on computing courses delivered between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2022)

- minutes of staff-student committee meetings with students on computing courses (held between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2022)

- DDPs for the computing department (for 2020-21 and 2021-22)

- module statistics and exam board meeting minutes for undergraduate computing courses (for academic years 2020-21 and 2021-22).

117. This information is relevant to all aspects of condition B4.

118. The assessment team reviewed module VLE sites including for all the modules in years 1 and 2 of the main degree scheme, Computer Science, and a selection of modules on other degree schemes.

119. The team's assessment drew on multiple sources of information, as identified above, that are relevant to condition B4. Following a risk-based approach, the assessment team considered assessment and feedback in more detail as set out below.

Assessment and feedback

120. The team reviewed how assessment for undergraduate computing courses is designed to be at the appropriate level and how pass rates and other information are used to inform module review and development.

121. The assessment team reviewed this area because of initial concerns about the mark distributions in some courses and the choice to use mainly MCQs in some courses. For example, information supplied to the assessment team by Goldsmiths' showed that in Numerical Mathematics IS51026B over 50 per cent of computer science students obtained a first and the course had weekly MCQs.

122. The key features of assessment on undergraduate computing courses identified by the assessment team are:

   a. Use of a mixed range of assessment methods: coursework assignments including laboratory reports, assessment using online MCQs, extended projects, presentations, portfolios, pitches, degree shows and some closed book in-person examinations. This mix applied to the assessment of students at all levels of the courses (4, 5 and 6).

   b. Written feedback prepared by staff on coursework submissions was identified by the provider as key sources of feedback for students on the course. These included

laboratory reports, the automated results from MCQs, feedback during laboratory sessions, feedback during presentations and poster sessions, and peer review.

    c. Detailed review of module results by the annual exam board.

    d. The assessment team reviewed lecture notes, assignments and module objectives to check that the level and challenge of assessments across all levels of study were sufficient to enable students to meet the required learning outcomes.

123. The team reviewed the assessments set for a range of undergraduate modules. Detailed assessment descriptions and what was required to gain good marks were available on the VLE for almost all modules. In a few modules the team found details of the assessments within the lecture videos, where the lecturer explained more about the assessment within the teaching session. Particularly good examples were found within some Level 4 and 5 project courses where students were guided on how to progress through the project stages, with feedback given before the next stage started.

124. The team saw that assessments had been designed in a way that minimises the opportunities for academic misconduct. For example, large banks of MCQ questions are randomly assigned to each student or for group projects requiring a component of individual work. In some courses the weekly quizzes can be taken multiple times to aid learning and practice for the final exam, which has the majority of the marks. For example, in Numerical Mathematics the final exam counted for 80 per cent of the total marks. The assessment team also had a detailed discussion with staff about the academic misconduct process and how this was used to both educate and detect any malpractice. The team heard from the Academic Misconduct Co-ordinator that teaching staff are given guidelines on assessment setting to reduce plagiarism and that they also advise their teaching assistants on spotting plagiarism. Cases had reduced from 56 a year in the early period of the pandemic to around 14 this year. The team was told that cases were mostly of a minor nature (failure to reference a source) and a discussion was had with each student identified to make sure they understood what constituted plagiarism and this has led to it rarely happening twice.

125. Staff from the computing department told the assessment team that students had commented on the 'spikey assessment loads' in the curriculum review, saying that too many assessment deadlines fell at the same time causing a spike in workload. The department told the assessment team that the programme leaders now review the assessment load for students in an all-staff workshop before the start of each academic year. The student deadlines are checked across all modules and the department has been able to remove the assessment spikes. The assessment team was able to verify that the VLE gives students information in advance about all the assessments and deadlines and that these appeared to be reasonably spread out.

126. The computing department emphasised the diversity of their student cohorts and the importance of designing inclusive assessments. The assessment team heard from departmental staff that departmental records show that 26 per cent of students registered on its computing courses have a disclosed disability. Staff told the team that they have used student feedback questionnaires to ask specific questions about accessibility and inclusivity relating to assessments. The team saw recent survey results and heard from staff how changes were made based on the feedback, for example, allowing additional time for all

students. Overall, the changes made as a result of feedback have resulted in an 85 per cent reduction in the number of students needing additional reasonable adjustments, such as alternative exam formats, in order to complete assessments.

127. The assessment team considered information relating to B4.2a, in particular the requirement that students are assessed effectively. The team found that the provider had a wide range of assessment styles and a consistent and detailed VLE giving module objectives, lecture materials and assignments. The team's review of assessment questions and marked responses through the VLE provided reassurance that the assignments provided stretch and rigour consistent with the level of the course and tested relevant skills. Also, the team's review found that assessments were being designed in a way that minimises the opportunities for academic misconduct and facilitates the detection of such misconduct where it does occur.

128. The assessment team noted in information provided by Goldsmiths' that some students appeared not to have completed assessments for their modules in the past few years. The team discussed this with staff and heard that the department had allowed more deferrals than normal due to the pandemic, but that this year they had reverted to their usual processes for deferral permissions. The team was reassured that this was a reflection of processes put in place to support students through the disruption caused by the pandemic, rather than an indication that students were not being effectively assessed.

129. The assessment team saw examples of the detailed data on each module that is provided to the annual exam board meetings as part of the review of each module. The assessors heard from departmental staff about changes made to a few modules as a result of these meetings. These changes aim to offer greater support to students to successfully complete the assessments. Examples include the rescheduling of assessments, breaking down the assessment into smaller pieces with feedback before the next piece of assessment, and moving modules to later years of study.

130. The team reviewed the marking processes for computing courses and heard that double marking was usual. On courses with a large number of students and with several markers, there were meetings to practice mark at least two pieces of work and to check that all work was marked to the same standard. The team also saw examples on the VLE that demonstrated how assessed work went through several markers before the marks were finalised.

131. The assessment team saw examples of staff at Goldsmiths' doing detailed analysis of the assessment data for each module on an annual basis. This and the examples of module and course changes provided reassurance to the team that the provider regularly checked that the assessments reflected students' knowledge and skills. The team was also reassured that different pathways were devised to reflect the changing needs of students and employers.

132. Following its review of information and further discussions with staff as outlined above, the assessment team did not identify any concerns relating to assessment and feedback.

B4 Conclusions

133. The assessment team's investigation drew on multiple sources of information, as identified above, that are relevant to B4. Following a risk-based approach, it did not identify any concerns relating to condition B4 from reviewing this information.

Annex A: Ongoing conditions of registration

Condition B1: Academic experience

Scope

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

Requirement

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

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

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

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

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

Definitions

B1.5 For the purposes of this condition B1:

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

ii. the importance of any of the developments described in the definition of **up-to-date** to the subject matter of the **higher education course**; and

iii. the time period by which it is planned that such developments described in the definition of **up-to-date** will be brought into the **higher education course** content.

b. "**coherent**" means a **higher education course** which ensures:

i. there is an appropriate balance between breadth and depth of content;

ii. subjects and skills are taught in an appropriate order and, where necessary, build on each other throughout the course; and

iii. key concepts are introduced at the appropriate point in the course content.

c. "**educational challenge**" means a challenge that is no less than the minimum level of rigour and difficulty reasonably expected of the **higher education course**, in the context of the subject matter and level of the course.

d. "**effectively delivered**", in relation to a **higher education course**, means the manner in which it is taught, supervised and assessed (both in-person and remotely) including, but not limited to, ensuring:

i. an appropriate balance between delivery methods, for example lectures, seminars, group work or practical study, as relevant to the content of the course; and

ii. an appropriate balance between directed and independent study or research, as relevant to the level of the course.

e. "**higher education course**" is to be interpreted:

i. in accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017; and

ii. so as to include, for the avoidance of doubt:

A. a course of study;

B. a programme of research;

C. any further education course that forms an integrated part of a higher education course; and

D. any module that forms part of a higher education course, whether or not that module is delivered as an integrated part of the course.

f. "**relevant skills**" means:

i. knowledge and understanding relevant to the subject matter and level of the **higher education course**; and

ii. other skills relevant to the subject matter and level of the **higher education course** including, but not limited to, cognitive skills, practical skills, transferable skills and professional competences.

g. "**up-to-date**" means representative of current thinking and practices in the subject matter to which the **higher education course** relates, including being **appropriately informed** by recent:

i. subject matter developments;

ii. research, industrial and professional developments; and

iii. developments in teaching and learning, including learning resources

Condition B2: Resources, support and student engagement

Scope

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

Requirement

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

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

> b. effective **engagement** with each **cohort of students** which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring:
>
> > i. a high quality academic experience for those students; and
> >
> > ii. those students succeed in and beyond higher education.

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

> a. focuses and places significant weight on:
>
> > i. the particular academic needs of each **cohort of students** based on prior academic attainment and capability; and
> >
> > ii. the principle that the greater the academic needs of the **cohort of students**, the number and nature of the steps needed to be taken are likely to be more significant;

> b. places less weight, as compared to the factor described in B2.3a., on the provider's financial constraints; and

> c. disregards case law relating to the interpretation of contractual obligations.

Definitions

B2.4 For the purposes of this condition B2:

a. "**academic misconduct**" means any action or attempted action that may result in a student obtaining an unfair academic advantage in relation to an **assessment**, including but not limited to plagiarism, unauthorised collaboration and the possession of unauthorised materials during an **assessment**.

b. "**appropriately qualified**" means staff have and maintain:

    i. expert knowledge of the subject they design and/or deliver;

    ii. teaching qualifications or training, and teaching experience, appropriate for the content and level of the relevant **higher education course**; and

    iii. the required knowledge and skills as to the effective delivery of their **higher education course**.

c. "**assessment**" means any component of a course used to assess student achievement towards a **relevant award**, including an examination and a test.

d. "**cohort of students**" means the group of students registered on to the **higher education course** in question and is to be interpreted by reference to the particular academic needs of those students based on prior academic attainment and capability.

e. "**engagement**" means routine provision of opportunities for students to contribute to the development of their academic experience and their **higher education course**, in a way that maintains the academic rigour of that course, including, but not limited to, through membership of the provider's committees, opportunities to provide survey responses, and participation in activities to develop the course and the way it is delivered.

f. "**higher education course**" is to be interpreted:

    i. in accordance with the Higher Education and Research Act 2017; and

    ii. so as to include, for the avoidance of doubt:

        A. a course of study;

        B. a programme of research;

        C. any further education course that forms an integrated part of a higher education course; and

        D. any module that forms part of a higher education course, whether or not that module is delivered as an integrated part of the course.

g. "**physical and digital learning resources**" includes, as appropriate to the content and delivery of the **higher education course**, but is not limited to:

    i. physical locations, for example teaching rooms, libraries, studios and laboratories;

ii. physical and digital learning resources, for example books, computers and software;

iii. the resources needed for digital learning and teaching, for example, hardware and software, and technical infrastructure; and

iv. other specialist resources, for example specialist equipment, software and research tools.

h. "**relevant award**" means:

i. a **research award**;

ii. a **taught award**; and/or

iii. any other type of award or qualification in respect of a **higher education course**, including an award of credit granted in respect of a module that may form part of a larger **higher education course**, whether or not granted pursuant to an authorisation given by or under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, another Act of Parliament or Royal Charter.

i. "**research award**" and "**taught award**" have the meanings given in section 42(3) of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

j. "**resources**" includes but is not limited to:

i. the staff team that designs and delivers a **higher education course** being collectively **sufficient in number**, **appropriately qualified** and deployed effectively to deliver in practice; and

ii. **physical and digital learning resources** that are adequate and deployed effectively to meet the needs of the **cohort of students**.

k. "**sufficient in number**" will be assessed by reference to the principle that the larger the cohort size of students, the greater the number of staff and amount of staff time should be available to students, and means, in the context of the staff team:

i. there is sufficient financial resource to recruit and retain sufficient staff;

ii. the provider allocates appropriate financial resource to ensuring staff are equipped to teach courses;

iii. **higher education courses** have an adequate number of staff, and amount of staff time; and

iv. the impact on students of changes in staffing is minimal.

l. "**support**" means the effective deployment of assistance, as appropriate to the content of the **higher education course** and the **cohort of students**, including but not limited to:

i. academic support relating to the content of the **higher education course**;

ii. support needed to underpin successful physical and digital learning and teaching;

iii. support relating to understanding, avoiding and reporting **academic misconduct**; and

iv. careers support, but for the avoidance of doubt, does not include other categories of non-academic support.

Condition B4: Assessment and awards

Scope

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

Requirement

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

a. students are **assessed effectively**;

b. each **assessment** is **valid** and **reliable**;

c. **academic regulations** are designed to ensure that **relevant awards** are **credible**;

d. subject to paragraph B4.3, in respect of each **higher education course**, **academic**

regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable **higher education course**; and

e. **relevant awards** granted to students are **credible** at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.

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

a. a **higher education course** is assessing a language that is not English; or

b. the provider is able to demonstrate to the OfS, on the balance of probabilities, that its **academic regulations**, or failure to have any **academic regulations**, for assessing technical proficiency in the English language for one or more students are strictly necessary as a matter of law because compliance with B4.2d in respect of that student, or those students:

i. would amount to a form of discrimination for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010; and

ii. cannot be objectively justified for the purposes of relevant provisions of that Act; and

iii. does not fall within an exception or exclusion provided for under or by virtue of that Act, including but not limited to provisions of the Act that relate to competence standards.

Definitions

B4.4 For the purposes of this condition B4:

a. "**academic misconduct**" means any action or attempted action that may result in a student obtaining an unfair academic advantage in relation to an **assessment**, including but not limited to plagiarism, unauthorised collaboration and the possession of unauthorised materials during an **assessment**.

b. "**academic regulations**" means regulations adopted by the provider, which govern its **higher education courses**, including but not limited to:

> i. the assessment of students' work;

> ii. student discipline relating to academic matters;

> iii. the requirements for **relevant awards**; and

> iv. the method used to determine classifications, including but not limited to:

>> A. the requirements for an award; and

>> B. the algorithms used to calculate the classification of awards.

c. "**assessed effectively**" means assessed in a challenging and appropriately comprehensive way, by reference to the subject matter of the **higher education course**, and includes but is not limited to:

> i. providing stretch and rigour consistent with the level of the course;

> ii. testing **relevant skills**; and

> iii. **assessments** being designed in a way that minimises the opportunities for **academic misconduct** and facilitates the detection of such misconduct where it does occur.

d. "**assessment**" means any component of a course used to assess student achievement towards a **relevant award**, including an examination and a test.

e. "**credible**" means that, in the reasonable opinion of the OfS, **relevant awards** reflect students' knowledge and skills, and for this purpose the OfS may take into account factors which include, but are not limited to:

> i. the number of **relevant awards** granted, and the classifications attached to them, and the way in which this number and/or the classifications change over time and compare with other providers;

> ii. whether students are **assessed effectively** and whether **assessments** are **valid** and **reliable**;

> iii. any actions the provider has taken that would result in an increased number of **relevant awards**, and/or changes in the classifications attached to them, whether or not the achievement of students has increased, for example, changes to assessment practices or **academic regulations**; and

> iv. the provider's explanation and evidence in support of the reasons for any changes in the classifications over time or differences with other providers.

f. "**higher education course**" is to be interpreted:

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

g. "**relevant award**" means:

> i. a **research award**;
>
> ii. a **taught award**; and/or
>
> iii. any other type of award or qualification in respect of a **higher education course**, including an award of credit granted in respect of a module that may form part of a larger **higher education course**, whether or not granted pursuant to an authorisation given by or under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, another Act of Parliament or Royal Charter.

h. "**relevant skills**" means:

> i. knowledge and understanding relevant to the subject matter and level of the **higher education course**; and
>
> ii. other skills relevant to the subject matter and level of the **higher education course** including, but not limited to, cognitive skills, practical skills, transferable skills and professional competences.

i. "**reliable**" means that an **assessment**, in practice, requires students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in a manner which is consistent as between the students registered on a **higher education course** and over time, as appropriate in the context of developments in the content and delivery of the **higher education course**.

j. "**research award**" and "**taught award**" have the meanings given in section 42(3) of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017.

k. "**valid**" means that an **assessment** in fact takes place in a way that results in students demonstrating knowledge and skills in the way intended by design of the assessment.