Review of UK transnational education in Greece: University of Derby, Mediterranean College and Vakalo College of Art and Design

November 2015

Executive summary

This review considers the University of Derby's partnerships with two private colleges in Greece that deliver undergraduate and master's degree programmes leading to the University's awards. With some 1,000 registered students, these two partnerships form a high proportion of the 9,300 students studying for University of Derby awards in 10 countries. The two partnerships, however, differ significantly. The collaboration with Vakalo College of Art and Design based in Athens is long established, having begun in 1996, and consists of validated undergraduate and master's degrees in design and graphic arts that are entirely taught and assessed in Greek. The link with Mediterranean College is more recent and involves franchised and a small number of validated programmes, designed by the University, which are largely taught and examined in English. The range of the Vakalo programmes is quite focused, with two BAs and two MAs in architectural, landscape, theatre and graphic design. In contrast, the range of programmes at Mediterranean College is wider, consisting of eight undergraduate and seven master's programmes in business, education, psychology, psychotherapy, engineering and computing.

A core feature of the University's approach to managing partner delivery leading to its awards is to prescribe a single regulatory and operational environment that applies to all the partners, in the UK and beyond. All the regulations and procedures governing the approval of partners and the delivery of programmes are contained in the University's regulations and a set of eight detailed Quality Handbooks which are reviewed annually to ensure compliance with relevant academic codes and frameworks. Quality Handbooks are complemented by detailed operational manuals for each partner that specify the responsibilities of departments and individuals within both the University and the partner. Where other languages are involved, the University specifies and operates detailed language and translation policies.

This strict uniformity in the regulatory environment appears to support reliable and resilient liaison between academics and administrators in the University and its partners. At a time of substantial change in the senior management and structure of the University, collaborative contacts at the level of individual programmes continue relatively undisturbed. A further distinctive feature is the range of approaches to the language in which students are taught and assessed, which may be entirely Greek, entirely English or, most commonly, a mixture of the two. The approach taken in the University's partnerships in Greece is to recognise that students need to develop their academic and professional skills both in their first language,

in this case Greek, as well as in English. This philosophy is most pronounced in the case of Mediterranean College, where undergraduates begin their programmes largely in Greek but finish them entirely in English.

Introduction

1   The University of Derby traces its origins to 1851, with the establishment of a diocesan institution for the training of school mistresses, and it remained largely a teacher training college throughout much of the twentieth century. In 1983 the Derbyshire College of Higher Education was formed through a merger of Bishop Lonsdale College of Education, Derby College of Art and Technology and Matlock College of Higher Education. The College of Higher Education was granted university status in 1993.

2   In 1998 the University merged with High Peak College of Further Education, creating the framework for the present University, which now has more than 28,000 students and operates across the county of Derbyshire, with principal sites in Derby and Buxton and with a new centre opening in Chesterfield in 2016. The University's academic programmes are provided through seven colleges, containing 17 departments together with a growing number of Research Institutes. Its collaborative provision currently has over 9,300 registered students studying at its international partners.

3   The University's policy on collaborative provision is to select international partnerships that are consistent with its Corporate Plan 2014-19 and its draft International Partnerships Strategy 2015-20. Partners are chosen where they add to the University's international profile and reputation in the delivery of higher education. Partnerships are developed to provide a 'best in class' experience to students and they must be financially sustainable over the medium to long term. The University has 29 partnerships in 11 countries.

4   The University's principles and procedures governing the management of international partnerships are set out in its *Quality Handbook 4: Collaborative Provision*, which prescribes the arrangements for all collaborative activities where the University makes an award or gives credit leading to an award in the UK or overseas. The use of the same clearly defined and articulated regulations and procedures in dealing with all its partners appears to be a source of coherence in the University's management of all its collaborations, both in the UK and internationally.

5   The University's two international partnerships in Greece use different partnership models. Most of the programmes delivered by Mediterranean College in Athens and Thessaloniki are franchised, while those delivered by Vakalo Art and Design College in Athens are validated.

6   Mediterranean College (MC) is a private college owned by the Xinis Educational Group and has been in operation since 1977. The Xinis Group enrols some 8,000 students annually in four cities in Greece. MC runs sites in Athens and Thessaloniki and has been in partnership with the University of Derby (UoD) since 2010. MC is a founder member and a leading player in the Hellenic Colleges Association, which represents those Greek colleges offering higher education from overseas institutions. All members have been accredited by the British Accreditation Council. The Hellenic Colleges Association has been active in lobbying the government for the formal recognition of overseas degrees studied in Greece under franchise arrangements. There is large unmet demand for higher education in Greece, with more than 35,000 students travelling abroad each year because they have been unable to gain entry to the state system.

7   The relationship with the University has grown to include eight undergraduate and seven master's programmes in business, education, psychology, psychotherapy, engineering and computing. Programmes are delivered part-time and/or full-time. The language of teaching and learning varies: entirely in Greek, entirely in English or, most commonly, a mixture of both. In 2015 there were 1,100 students registered for UoD

programmes at MC. At the time of this review MC intended to increase its collaborative provision not only with the University but also with other potential UK and EU partners in programme areas where the University does not have UK provision. This might involve validated programmes delivered in Greek and containing a higher proportion of local content.

8   Vakalo Art and Design College was founded in 1958 and delivers tertiary-level education in the applied arts in Greece. Operating from its Athens site, Vakalo is a longstanding partner of UoD, delivering undergraduate and later postgraduate arts provision through the partnership since 1996. It currently provides two undergraduate programmes, in graphic and interior design, and two master's programmes, in architectural design (including landscape and theatre design) and visual communication. All the programmes are taught and assessed in Greek. In 2015 around 140 students were registered for UoD-validated programmes at Vakalo College.

Developing, agreeing and managing arrangements for setting up and operating the link

9   Programmes leading to University awards take two forms: franchises, where a partner is authorised to provide all or part of a programme that has been designed by the University, and validations, where the University recognises a programme of study designed and delivered by a partner. These are complemented by accreditation, where the University recognises a programme designed and delivered by an employer partner organisation. Where a programme is already delivered at the University, approval for partners to deliver the programme takes the form of 'collaborative arrangements' approval, as detailed in Handbook 4. Where there is no associated home programme at UoD, programmes are validated for a fixed five-year period, as is the case at Vakalo.

10   Both the partnerships considered here are the product of evolved relationships with the University. MC was founded in 1977 specifically to run higher education programmes and was the first college in Greece to offer programmes in English, initially based on an American model delivered in conjunction with US universities. During the 1990s the College began to offer franchised programmes from UK universities and also became one of the largest Pearson Edexcel centres for HND programmes in Greece. At various times the College has offered programmes from the Universities of Derby, Coventry, Northumbria and Greenwich, and between 2003 and 2010 the partnership was with the University of Teesside. The University of Derby first approved the College to provide a range of franchised programmes in 2010.

11   The Vakalo College of Art and Design has been operating in Athens for more than 50 years as a provider of programmes in design. It is well known both in Greece and internationally. Its staff are qualified teachers of art and design and many are professional practitioners in their fields. The undergraduate programme in design was first validated by the UoD in 1996 as an unclassified BA and upgraded to full honours status in 1998. It was revalidated in 2003, 2009 and 2013. During this period an additional undergraduate degree in graphics and master's programmes in design and graphics were also approved.

12   The University's approach to collaborations does not distinguish between home and overseas partnerships. There is a two-stage approval process: partner approval followed by 'approval of collaborative arrangements', that is the approval of programmes and the curricula the partner will deliver together with the learning support resources and quality management procedures. Partnerships are subsequently reviewed every five years. The aims and procedures for the approval of new partners and subsequent partnership reviews are set out in precise detail in the University's *Quality Handbook 4: Collaborative Provision*.

13   The initial approval of new partners takes into account alignment with the strategic and academic aims of the University. Partnership approval involves due diligence checks and business and financial development approval, and includes an event at the partner's site where resources are assessed. Contracts are updated on a three to five-year basis.

14   Partnerships are reviewed every five years, when a panel event typically takes place at the partner's premises. Partnership reviews focus on the strategic direction of the partnership from the perspective of both partners, as well as providing an assurance of the ongoing maintenance of standards and quality of the provision. Partnership review and validation are not tied together and can occur independently. Partnership review reapproves the contractual relationships supporting the delivery of programmes, not the academic programmes themselves.

15   The partnership with MC was reviewed in March 2015 and at the time of the QAA visit in November 2015 the College was addressing the recommendations in the form of an enhancement plan overseen by the Collaborative Partnerships Sub-Committee of the University, a subcommittee of the Academic Development and Quality Committee.

16   The partnership with Vakalo was reviewed in September 2015. In the year preceding the review UoD had become concerned about the viability of the partnership, mainly because of a downturn in student numbers caused by the economic recession. The recently formed University Strategic Partnerships Unit (USPU) subsequently decided to support the partnership and to proceed to review.

17   The partnership review recommended reapproval as a continuing partner of the University for a further period of five years. The panel made one advisable recommendation: to formulate a plan that clearly articulated the shared understanding of the possibilities and potential for the growth and sustainability of the partnership.

18   The review team examined the original partnership approval reports, as well as the most recent partnership review reports of both MC and Vakalo, and found them to be detailed and robust. All reviews made appropriate use of external panel members from UK universities, and involved checks on teaching and resources and interviews with managers and programme leaders, as well as a range of meetings with students. The most recent reports contained commendations as well as recommendations, which were followed by detailed implementation plans with timetables for their completion. The University's clear policy on periodic partnership review and the thoroughness with which it is implemented is a **positive feature** of the provision.

19   Validated programmes, such as those at Vakalo, are approved for a fixed period and subject to revalidation. The programmes delivered at Vakalo have been successfully revalidated on a number of occasions, the last being in 2013. Franchised programmes at MC, on the other hand, are approved indefinitely but are subject to periodic review by the University, usually when it is conducting a periodic review of those same programmes at Derby.

20   The operational responsibilities of both UoD and its partners for the day-to-day management of individual programmes are set out in comprehensive and standardised operational manuals. These are lengthy but well-structured and easily navigable documents that provide information and guidance about all aspects of the partnership. This includes partner contact information, programme information, a detailed account of the responsibilities of each partner and an operational calendar. Three appendices provide a full list of relevant UoD and MC staff with contact details and, where relevant, job descriptions, guidance notes that provide links to UoD Quality Handbooks, and a history of updates to the manuals themselves. In addition, the operations manuals specify the respective responsibilities of partners with regard to the language of delivery and assessment on the

one hand, and of language and translation issues on the other. The manuals are reviewed and updated by USPU and the University Colleges annually. The clarity and completeness of the operational manuals setting out the respective responsibilities of the University and its collaborative partners are **positive features** of the provision.

21   The University also provides translated versions of its academic regulations for the benefit of students abroad who are enrolled on its programmes of study and are assessed in a language other than English.

22   The UoD Quality Handbooks are benchmarked against relevant sections of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code). The Handbooks are complemented by the University's academic regulations, which are informed by *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and by relevant sections of the University's Code of Practice. In addition to these external reference points, the design and delivery of the University's programmes are governed by other internal policies, such as the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

23   The consistent use by the University of a standardised set of very detailed regulations and procedures governing the design of programmes, the approval of partners and the validation or franchising of programmes appears to be a key strength. For example, the *Quality Handbook 4: Collaborative Provision*, currently in its fifth edition, comprises more than 80 pages, but is clear and useable in the guidance it provides. It is supported by other handbooks including those covering programme design, validation and approval. It is evident that, by maintaining and updating a set of regulations and procedures that apply similarly to all collaborations, the University ensures consistency and reliability in dealing with partners, and the importance attached by the University to highly standardised procedures is clearly well understood at MC.

Quality assurance

Academic standards

24   All University programmes are validated for an indefinite period, subject to satisfactory annual monitoring and periodic review, and this extends to programmes franchised to partner institutions. The University's Quality Handbooks 1-8 set out the quality assurance processes for all University programmes, including those that are franchised. The University converted all its provision from a 15-credit structure to a 20-credit structure in 2012-13, at which point the programmes at Vakalo were revalidated.

25   The compatibility of programmes with the Quality Code is addressed during the processes of programme approval, periodic review and annual monitoring. The report form for external examiners asks them to comment specifically on the appropriateness of the curriculum in the light of the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement. Scrutiny of external examiner reports shows that this is happening. Examiners are also asked to confirm explicitly that academic standards and the achievement of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions. In this respect the review team noted that a number of external examiners were also able to make specific comparisons between the level of achievement of MC students and students on the same programme at the University itself. It was explained to the review team that all externals examining assessment at MC are Greek speakers with experience of examining in the UK system.

26   The University's processes for review include periodic review and partnership review. Periodic review, which usually takes place every five years, addresses the maintenance of academic standards and quality of provision in a programme area and includes all programmes franchised to partners. It is an enhancement-focused review

process that seeks to identify both current and future mechanisms to improve the student learning experience. The QAA review team examined a recent report of a University periodic review that included programmes delivered in computing at MC. The report showed detailed consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of the collaboration and made one advisable recommendation designed to strengthen aspects of partnership working and compliance with University procedures.

27   The process for annual monitoring is set out in Quality Handbook 5 and the responsibilities for carrying it out detailed in the operational manuals. Partner institutions complete an annual collaborative report and an enhancement plan, which are considered through the University committee structure from programme/college level to institutional level. The production of the reports includes an analysis of a range of management information, including student admissions, achievement, progression and feedback. Annual monitoring considers student feedback, cohort statistics and external examiners' reports. Student perceptions of the quality of provision are gathered in a variety of ways, including questionnaires and student representation on programme committees.

28   The University makes comprehensive management information available to support the annual monitoring process. Annual monitoring reports include this statistical information as an appendix to the main body of the report but make relatively little reference to it in the report narrative. However, programme leaders at MC assured the review team that progression and achievement data were closely monitored and discussed, and that since the management information is based on data that they submit to the University, College staff were aware of problems at an early stage and had usually been able to address them before they entered the formal monitoring process. Many of the programmes delivered at the College show progression from one year to the next of between 80 and 90 per cent, and programme leaders pointed out that withdrawals were much more likely to reflect economic and family pressures than underperformance by students.

29   The University indicated that, with the formation of the new University Strategic Partnerships Unit, it plans to review the data provided to partners, as well as how it is considered within the University, in the 2015-16 academic year.

30   The annual monitoring reports from MC and Vakalo include information about the methods used for obtaining feedback on the student experience during the academic year, such as comments from student representatives and observations in questionnaires and programme committees. The monitoring reports provide summaries of the key themes and action taken or required to address issues. The students whom the QAA team met were aware of these processes and were able to give examples of how the College had responded to matters raised by student representatives.

31   The monitoring reports produced by partner organisations are considered by the relevant University programme team, which is responsible for managing the provision. This process requires the consideration of a range of evaluative evidence, including enhancement plans, minutes of monitoring meetings and reports produced by each college. The QAA team saw clear evidence that annual monitoring reports submitted by both Vakalo and MC are examined in detail by the relevant colleges at Derby as well as at an annual meeting of the Collaborative Partnerships Sub-Committee (CPSC), where the committee also assesses visit reports and external examiner reports. The CPSC makes detailed annual reports on these matters to the Academic Development Quality Committee (ADQC), which in turn reports to the Academic Board. In the view of the QAA review team the consistent and well-regulated attention paid to annual monitoring and its resulting enhancement plans by the University and its partners are **positive features**.

Assessment

32   The programmes at Vakalo are delivered and assessed in Greek. As these are design programmes, a considerable proportion of the assessed work consists of visual materials and artefacts. Documents seen by the QAA team, including operational manuals, staff-student committee minutes, external examiners' reports and particularly reports of visits by University staff from the Faculty of Arts, Design and Technology (now the College of Arts), all indicate that the language differences are well managed. A key resource is a part-time University staff member living in Greece who supports the partnership with translation services and attends meetings with the Vakalo staff when the University Partnership Lead is visiting. The University has appointed a Greek-speaking member of its own staff to act as translator for samples of student written work and as interpreter at meetings of University staff and external examiners with Vakalo students. This member of staff also acts as the internal moderator for written assessments.

33   Some challenges remain. For example, the annual monitoring reports for both 2012-13 and 2013-14 record problems with providing translations of markers' and moderators' feedback to students. The University informed the QAA team that actions to address this have been taken on a case-by-case basis to assure the standard of the award. To obtain a more routine solution, the approved translation policy for Vakalo was being revised, to be considered at CPSC in autumn 2015. It will include control translations to ensure accuracy of translation, a schedule for translations to be published by the project manager annually, and a confirmed list of documents that need to be translated from English to Greek and from Greek to English. The University indicated that it had initiated discussion with Vakalo about moving towards the introduction of some use of English in teaching and assessment.

34   Language and translation policies have been in place since 2003 and are incorporated within the Quality Handbook 4 Collaborative Provision. In conjunction with relevant sections of the Academic Regulations and other Quality Handbooks relating to programme validation and external examiners, the language and translation policies provide a considered and risk-based approach to assuring the comparability of student learning opportunities and levels of achievement across the different languages in which they may be taught and assessed.

35   The language policy identifies circumstances in which collaborative provision can be delivered in a 'local' language other than English. It then identifies steps to be taken to mitigate the risks involved in such delivery. These include cultural awareness, appropriate external membership of validation panels, the expected level of English language competence on the part of the partner's staff and students and the expected level of foreign language competence on the part of UoD staff involved in managing the partnership. In relation to assessment, the policy recommends the use of bilingual internal moderators and external examiners. An alternative but higher-risk option is the supplementation of the internal moderation and/or external examining arrangements through the employment of associates who will act as external moderators. It further requires verification by independent subject specialists of promotional and teaching materials to be made available in the local language and does not encourage reliance on the linguistic skills of colleagues in partner organisations, or on the services of professional translators.

36   The translation policy begins by specifying which core documentation must be translated into the 'local' language for operational and quality assurance purposes. It then moves on to specify steps to be taken when setting and marking student work written in a language other than English. A key expectation is that an appropriate sample of student work will be translated for the purposes of internal moderation by University staff, even where the language expertise of external examiners or moderators means that no

translations are required for external moderation. The policy concludes with systems that it has established to provide independent quality control of translations. The University's awareness of the risks involved in operating in a language other than English and the clarity and robustness of its language and translation policies are **positive features**.

37   The vast majority of students at MC have Greek as their first language, and teaching and assessment may primarily be in English or Greek depending on the FHEQ level of the module concerned. Where delivery and assessment is in Greek, both partners follow the University's language and translation policies. The operational manuals provide in further detail the language arrangements for each programme and the responsibilities for carrying out and verifying translations where required. In the case of undergraduate programmes the students are taught in Greek at Level 4, in Greek and English at Level 5 and in English only at Level 6. Teaching staff pointed out that the gradual transition from Greek to English assessment can help to mitigate the challenge that many students experience in moving between educational cultures, from Greek secondary education to UK higher education. The picture is rather different at postgraduate level, where all but one master's degrees are taught exclusively in English.

38   The use of a mixture of Greek and English at MC reflects a pedagogic approach developed over the last 20 years in response to analysis of student needs. A primary goal of the College is to produce graduates who are proficient in their discipline and able to use it in both Greek and English-speaking environments. This means that they must be comfortable using practice-related discourse in both languages. For this reason Greek cannot be ignored. Consequently, the first three semesters are taught mainly in Greek and the final three semesters mainly in English. Staff met by the review team described semesters three and four as a 'transitional period' and pointed out that in practice a mixture of Greek and English is used throughout the programme. Students confirmed this, and told the review team that the transition from Greek to English was well designed, and underwritten by language support classes in English and materials in English that they could download from the University. The pedagogic rationale at MC for the progression from Greek to English as the language of delivery at different points in programmes is a **positive feature**.

39   The language of tuition is always the language of assessment. All student work is marked and internally moderated, often by exchanging scripts between Athens and Thessaloniki. A selection of work is translated and sent to a moderator at Derby. At the same time a bilingual external examiner oversees not only student work but also the quality of the translation of module assessment briefs and handbooks. External examiners see student work in both Greek and English and in some cases comment on the accuracy of its translation in their reports. The fact that final-year work at both MC and the University is submitted in English facilitates comparison of levels of student achievement.

40   The curriculum offered at MC contains elements designed for the Greek context. College staff had been involved in the curriculum and the assessment design of programmes, as part of the internationalisation of the curriculum and contextualisation for the Greek market, and had suggested modifications to the curriculum, which the University had accepted. College staff are encouraged to use new methods of assessment and marking with support and training from the University. Assessment briefs and handbooks are devised by the College annually and agreed by the University and the external examiner. Programme teams ensure that there are key texts in Greek, and the library also keeps copies of core English texts. The University has Greek-speaking members of staff who, when visiting, check that Greek text books are appropriate. The module and programme handbooks are written in Derby within a common template but are translated and adapted to local conditions by the teaching staff at the College.

41	Assessment boards are either held at Derby and chaired by a senior member of University staff (for franchised provision), with participation by the partner either in person or via video-conference, or held at and chaired by the partner (validated provision), with a member of University staff in attendance.

42	The sample of external examiners' reports seen by the QAA team shows that assessment is benchmarked to UK standards. The responses to external examiners' reports and the planned actions that follow are comprehensive at both MC and Vakalo. There was some evidence that students used to the Greek context and to the expectations of private colleges expected to be able to receive comments on drafts of assignment submissions. In the context of the relatively small module cohorts and the culture of personal attention from tutors that prevails at MC, it was apparent that students are able to have significant help with their written work. It was clear that the academic staff were aware that this pattern should not be allowed to develop into a form of 'coaching', leading to higher than deserved marks.

Quality of learning opportunities

43	Admissions policies and procedures applied by partners follow those of the University, with the specific responsibilities of the partners set out in the Operational Manual. All students applying to MC and Vakalo with appropriate qualifications are interviewed by the programme leaders. In the case of MC most students take an English language placement test. There is an expectation that students will have the equivalent of IELTS 4.5 on entry and will reach IELTS 6.0 by Level 6, when English fully replaces Greek as the language of delivery. The admissions decisions are made by the colleges but are spot-checked annually by University staff and student entry qualifications are considered at periodic review.

44	The provision of student support is delegated to the partners who are responsible for the provision of academic and pastoral support, including English language support and career guidance, as set out in the operational manuals. Induction is carried out by College staff and a member of University staff visits early in the academic year to provide an induction to the University. Students are able to contact the University programme leaders. Details are set out in the Student Programme Handbooks.

45	Collecting and responding to student feedback is the responsibility of the colleges. MC conducts Programme Liaison Boards twice annually, attended by student representatives, and Vakalo uses student-staff committees as the main vehicle for student feedback. Issues arising from these meetings are fed back to the University, although it was identified in the March 2015 partnership review of MC that this area would benefit from strengthening. The University Visit Policy sets the requirements of the University with respect to visiting the partner and meeting students. Staff and students whom the QAA team met indicated that there was contact with University staff when they visited, though students indicated that they would appreciate more frequent teaching and lecturing inputs from them.

46	At MC, staff and administrative offices are close to teaching rooms and the small scale of the College is clearly used to the benefit of students in terms of access to practical and academic support. The system of annual visits and reports by franchising departments at the University includes checks on learning resouces, including IT and library facilities, and the identification of necessary investments. The Managing Director at the College, with responsibility for the management of all academic provision, has a weekly online conference meeting with her opposite number at the University.

47	Induction, personal tutor support and the development of students' personal and employability skills are key features of the student experience at MC. It is standard practice for each member of staff to report monthly on the tutees for whom they are responsible, including monitoring their attendance. The College has developed an integrated

employability scheme and a counselling centre. It holds an Employability Week and an annual Employability Fair supported by a wide range of both local and international employers. Students also have access to the Xinis Education Festival, a four-month event organised annually by the Xinis Educational Group, where they can choose from up to 140 free seminars, conferences and workshops.

48   All staff and students agreed that the VLE was effective when searching for journals, books, articles and lessons and that an earlier history of delays in registering students for the system, and in access to the University's internet resources, had been resolved during the current year. Students particularly praised the accessibility of staff, both personally and through email. Access to the University elibrary resources was reported by students as a particular benefit.

49   The University approves as 'accredited lecturers' all staff employed by partner colleges who teach or assess on University awards. The University is responsible for ensuring that all partner staff are inducted into University policies and processes through staff development sessions conducted by visiting University staff. The evidence heard by the QAA team during the visit to MC indicated that staff development, mentoring and peer review are used effectively. The staff whom the team met described both local staff development support and sessions providing guidance on University procedures provided by visiting academic and professional staff from Derby. Students indicated that they would appreciate more guest lectures in their subjects by UoD staff.

Information on higher education provision

50   Responsibilities for the production, checking and approval of publicity material are set out in the Operational Manuals and in a Marketing Protocol. Programme leaders in Derby are responsible for approving student handbooks alongside any course material on a yearly basis. The University Operational Manual describes translation arrangements for all publicity material, as well as the responsibilities for checking public information.

51   The Operational Manual also sets out responsibilities for handling complaints and appeals, in line with the University's regulations. Each institution provides guidance to students on the appeals and complaints processes. Students whom the QAA team met indicated that they knew how to use the college's complaints process and were aware that it was possible to raise matters for the attention of the University. However, they all pointed out that they believed that informal solutions were readily available and effectively used.

52   The University is responsible for the production of the degree certificates and transcripts issued to MC students. The award certificate does not indicate the location of study. This appears on the accompanying Degree/Diploma Supplement, which states the place of study and the address of the partner as well as the language(s) of instruction.

Conclusion

Positive features

The following positive features are identified:

- the University's clear policy on periodic partnership review and the thoroughness with which it is implemented (paragraph 18)
- the clarity and completeness of the operational manuals in setting out the respective responsibilities of the University and its collaborative partners (paragraph 20)

- the consistent and well-regulated attention paid to annual monitoring and its resulting enhancement plans by the University and its partners (paragraph 31)
- the University's awareness of the risks involved in operating in a language other than English and the clarity and robustness of its language and translation policies (paragraph 36)
- the pedagogic rationale at MC for the progression from Greek to English as the language of delivery at different points in the programmes (paragraph 38).

Recommendations

The review team makes no particular recommendations.

University of Derby's response to the review report

The University of Derby is pleased to receive the report reviewing our TNE partnerships with Vakalo College of Art and Design and Mediterranean College. The University notes that no recommendations were made by the review team and particularly welcomes the identification of five positive features, which reflect the University's strength in collaborative provision and its commitment to providing and assuring a high quality student experience, whatever the location of delivery. The University will take the opportunity to reflect upon the positive features that were highlighted in the report and consider how best to further develop these strengths and to assure ourselves that best practice is reflected in other areas of collaborative provision.