



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Amity Global Education Ltd t/a the Amity University [In] London, October 2017

1 Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that Amity Global Education Ltd t/a the Amity University [In] London (AUIL) has made acceptable progress with implementing the action plan from the November 2016 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 AUIL has recruited to three of its programmes, and at the time of the visit there were four students on the BA (Hons) Business Studies and 17 students on the MBA (both programmes validated by the University of Northampton), and nine students registered on PhD programmes (validated by the University of Bolton). Its previous relationship with Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) has now ended, and there are no trailing students on programmes validated by ARU.

3 At the time of the HER (AP) visit in 2016, AUIL had 11 academic members of staff. At the time of the monitoring visit AUIL reported 13 academic members of staff, five of whom work full-time, although two also have some administrative responsibilities. The remaining eight work on a part-time basis.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The review team considered a range of evidence, including strategic and programme documentation, and information on the website and virtual learning environment (VLE). A meeting was held with senior staff to discuss progress made against the action plan and the review team met a cross-section of students, drawn from the three programmes that had recruited. AUIL has proactively and systematically reviewed and built on its responses to the good practice identified in the HER (AP) report of 2016 (paragraphs 5-7), and made progress against the recommendations (paragraphs 9 and 10) and affirmation (paragraph 11).

5 AUIL has developed further the good practice identified in relation to the comprehensive support provided to students in academic, professional and pastoral areas. It has continued to develop its General Learning Unit and makes available on its VLE resources to support student learning in digital literacy. The VLE has been enhanced to incorporate information on academic writing, careers guidance and entrepreneurship.

6 AUIL provides an extensive range of opportunities for student engagement. These are articulated very clearly on the Student Voice Flowchart and confirmed by students the review team met during the annual monitoring visit. There is a Student Voice Policy which was revised in June 2017, and students are represented in key institutional committees. AUIL monitors student engagement through the production of an annual report (see paragraph 7). To increase participation in institutional quality processes, AUIL has adjusted its meeting schedule to fit in with the diverse attendance patterns of its student

body; meetings are now arranged on days when student representatives have classes and are already on campus. In addition, the AUIL Research Committee now includes student representation, and students play an active part in open day activities. Student engagement mechanisms were recognised as good practice in the final Annual Monitoring Report of its previous awarding body, ARU, at its Senate meeting in November 2016.

7 AUIL has a thorough and effective approach to evaluating student feedback through the production of an annual Student Feedback Report, which takes account of programme and module evaluation, and monitors progress against an action plan. An annual Student Engagement Report and Integrated Student Services Unit report is produced as well as reports on the analysis of student feedback, and the information in the reports is used to enhance engagement in student voice mechanisms.

8 Since the last review, AUIL has negotiated an arrangement with Birkbeck (University of London) Students' Union for membership and access to Birkbeck societies for its own student cohort, and students reported that they welcome the social opportunities this provides.

9 Externally facing information for research students has been developed to inform their application process. The research section on the website has been restructured and enhanced, with clear links to information about PhD programmes at the University of Bolton, the awarding body. Students are well supported by the research team at AUIL in preparing their research proposals prior to making a formal application to the University of Bolton, and AUIL is beginning to develop a research centre culture with its first research conference in November 2017.

10 AUIL has reviewed and rationalised its assessment policies and procedures to ensure that they are fit for purpose for staff and students. It has collated and restructured existing information to create a comprehensive assessment handbook for staff. A separate assessment handbook, which also draws on AUIL policies and procedures, has been created for students, who reported that they find it helpful.

11 AUIL has taken steps to improve the quality and content of the website and continues to update the platform. It undertook an internal Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) compliance audit to ensure that information was full and accurate, and implemented changes as appropriate. The design and layout of the website has been improved and it is now accessible on a range of mobile devices. There is oversight of the platform through the Marketing Advisory Committee.

12 AUIL has effective structures to support admissions. The Head of Admissions reports to the Academic Director, and there is a comprehensive Admissions Policy and an Admissions Committee which has oversight of admissions processes. Representatives from the admissions team sit on the Student Services Committee. Admissions requirements are defined in programme specifications and in Research Degree Regulations for doctoral students, all of which are available through the AUIL website. International recruitment includes the use of recruitment agents, and although AUIL does not currently have international students recruited through agents, it does have a systematic approach for the management and oversight of these transactions. There are separate application processes for taught provision and for research students, with clear application forms which were updated in 2017. Improved information on research degree admissions was identified as an action in AUIL's action plan following the HER (AP) in 2016, and revisions to website information and admission processes for research students were agreed by the Research Committee and the Admissions Committee. Students confirmed that the admissions process was clear, and that they were well supported in making an application to AUIL. AUIL has a

clear Complaints and Appeals Procedure for Applicants, and a Student Charter which includes arrangements for admissions, both of which are available on the website.

13 AUIL follows well-defined internal processes of annual programme monitoring. Annual monitoring takes place at module and course levels, for both taught and research degrees. The Course Evaluation Report 2017 is very thorough, makes good use of the limited data available, and areas of good practice and enhancement are clearly identified. Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) are reviewed by the Quality Review and Assurance Committee (QRAC). The Student Services Committee also receives AMRs, to evaluate areas that impact on student services.

14 While AUIL has routinely engaged in annual monitoring with its previous validating body, it has yet to complete a full annual monitoring cycle with the University of Northampton, and this will be reviewed towards the end of 2017.

15 As part of its annual review processes AUIL considers student data; however, it has not yet reached the point where students are expected to have completed their programme of study under the new validation arrangements. Eight students were recruited in April 2016, including one student who requested a deferred start date of October 2017. The remaining seven students commenced the MBA in April 2016, and were joined by a further three students in October 2016; all 10 students are being put forward to the University of Northampton for consideration at its course assessment board in November 2017, and the completion data in relation to the MBA will be made available at the next monitoring visit. There were two further MBA students recruited in February 2017 who are expected to complete in July 2018, and the student with the deferred start date commenced the MBA in October 2017, with four further students in the process of enrolling to this programme at the time of the visit. There were two students enrolled to the final year of the BA Business Studies programme in April 2017, who are expected to complete in July 2018; they were joined by two further students who enrolled to the programme in October 2017, who will be expected to complete in January 2019. The nine full-time PhD students who enrolled to the University of Bolton research degree in February 2017 are expected to complete in February 2020. AUILs' evaluation of progression and achievement data will be considered at subsequent monitoring visits.

4 Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education

16 AUIL works with external reference points in meeting UK expectations for higher education. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is referenced throughout AUIL's strategic and operational documents. Revisions to mapping against the Quality Code are recorded as an action in the Matrix Action Plan 2016. AUIL undertook a formal Internal Audit of Consumer Protection Compliance, as a result of which some changes were made to the website. Alterations were approved by its QRAC. Staff were cognisant of the requirements of the *Equality Act 2010*, which is reflected in the content of the website, admissions documentation, the Amity Charter and the new Assessment Handbook for Staff. AUIL engages with UK NARIC and UKVI regarding updating on admissions practices. The organisation is a strategic partner of the Higher Education Academy, and eight members of staff are recognised as Fellows of the HEA.

5 Background to the monitoring visit

17 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider

of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

18 The monitoring visit was carried out by Dr Helen Corkill, Reviewer, and Ms Ruth Stoker, Coordinator, on 24 October 2017.

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