



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of the Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education, May 2015

Section 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 the Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education (the College) has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the June 2014 [monitoring visit report](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last monitoring visit

2 The College recruited two permanent full-time teaching staff in February 2015, taking the total number of permanent full-time teaching staff to five. No other major strategic changes have taken place at the College since the monitoring visit in June 2014.

3 There are five students enrolled on three higher education programmes: a Professional Diploma in Islamic Economics and Finance; a Diploma in Arabic Language; and a Certificate in Arabic Language. The programmes are placed within the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) at levels 11, 10 and 8 respectively. In addition, since the 2014 monitoring visit, 37 students completed an Academic Training Programme in Multiculturalism and Leadership, a short course at SCQF level 9. All programmes are accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). All of the students have been recruited since the June 2014 monitoring visit.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

4 Students confirmed that the College continues to encourage engagement with, and provide opportunities for, student representation on College committees. Students were unanimous in their view that the College provides a supportive learning environment. All are described as approachable, supportive and helpful. Students are confident that their voice is heard and acted on, and stated that where suggestions cannot be implemented, College staff discuss alternative solutions with students.

5 The College continues to provide a dedicated staff development and training budget that is available to all academic and administrative staff. The Research Development Fund remains available to support academic and teaching staff development activities, particularly activities associated with enhancing their research portfolio. The College Board continues to support the research culture as part of its ambition for the College to be recognised as a research centre for the scientific study of religion in conjunction with philosophy, sociology, anthropology, politics and history.

6 The Academic Affairs Committee oversees the delivery, monitoring and review of the College's higher education provision. The Committee receives and considers SQA systems verifier reports commenting on policy and procedures, and external verifier reports commenting on programme-specific matters. The College has developed an Academic Evaluations Policy to take account of SQA annual monitoring and evaluation requirements. However, the Policy does not include a mechanism to ensure that matters raised in Unit Coordinator reports are monitored and taken to a successful conclusion, nor does the policy

encourage the sharing of good practice. Discussion with staff and students confirmed that the small size of the College enables matters requiring action to be resolved informally as they arise, and facilitates the sharing of good practice. The development of an internal action plan that sets out matters requiring action and good practice worthy of further dissemination would enhance oversight by the Academic Affairs Committee of the delivery, monitoring and review of the College's higher education provision.

7 The College continues to develop a formal policy and structure to support peer review of teaching. Staff appointed since the last monitoring visit have been reviewed by more experienced colleagues and formal written feedback has been provided. New members of staff commented favourably on the informal peer support provided by senior colleagues.

8 The College's application and admission process is set out clearly on its website. Academic and English language proficiency requirements are included. Applicants are advised to ask for a copy of their English language test report form to be sent to the College. The level of English language competence meets UK Visa and Immigration requirements. Students confirmed that they were provided with accurate information and helpful assistance during the admission process. The College admission process meets the Expectation of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*.

9 The College has reviewed and updated its assessment and internal verification policies to ensure that SQA requirements are met. As part of this process the College has mapped its assessment policy and procedures to the Expectation of the Quality Code, *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*, and SQA's Qualification Approval and Verification requirements. Students spoke positively about the information and guidance provided on the assessment process and have a clear understanding of what is expected to achieve their learning outcomes. The College assessment process meets the Expectation of the Quality Code, *Chapter B6*.

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

10 The College has completed a comprehensive mapping of the Quality Code against its policies and procedures, demonstrating effective alignment. In April 2015 the College ran an internal staff workshop dedicated to discussing the impact of the Quality Code on the work of the College. Each staff member was invited to lead a discussion on one or more Quality Code chapters, and student representatives were invited to attend. Staff met during the monitoring visit indicated that this workshop significantly increased their awareness of sector-wide expectations and practice. Staff spoke positively and enthusiastically about the growing enhancement culture within the College. Their engagement with the Quality Code and other higher education institutions has provided opportunities for staff to reflect on wider quality and standards matters and to enhance their own practice accordingly.

11 The College continues to explore opportunities to secure a partnership with a higher education institution.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

12 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.

13 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Grant Horsburgh, Coordinator, and Mr Tom Cantwell, Reviewer, on 27 May 2015.

QAA1274 - R4357 – Jul 15

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2015
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Email enquiries@qaa.ac.uk
Web www.qaa.ac.uk

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786