



## Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Anglo-European College of Chiropractic, May 2016

### 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 Anglo-European College of Chiropractic (the College) has made acceptable progress with implementing the action plan resulting from the May 2012 [Institutional Review](#).

### 2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 The College is currently offering an integrated Master of Chiropractic (Hons), BSc (Hons) Clinical Exercise Science, Postgraduate Certificate Professional Practice (Chiropractic), MSc Advanced Professional Practice, and MSc Medical Ultrasound. There are 37.1 full-time equivalent academic management and teaching staff and 24.5 full-time equivalent administrative and support staff employed by the College. There are currently 636 students enrolled, compared with 674 in 2015.

### 3 Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The College continues to make acceptable progress in implementing the action plan arising from the review visit in May 2012. Most actions in the 2012 report have been fully addressed and others have been satisfactorily progressed and evaluated through the processes of the College's academic committee structure, which includes student representation at all levels. The College continues to consolidate areas of good practice (see paragraph 4) and to develop its responses to recommendations and affirmations. These include the student contribution to quality assurance and enhancement (paragraph 5); processes to monitor student data (paragraph 7); processes for the dissemination of good practice (paragraph 8); and the development of e-learning support (paragraph 9). Admissions processes are rigorous in their academic requirements and in identifying suitable motivations for study (paragraph 10). Appropriate structures and procedures are in place for programme monitoring, with student engagement included in the structures (paragraph 11). The return of student data provides a clear report on student progression, retention and achievement (paragraph 12). The College's enhancement of processes and provision, on the whole, has been effective, and it has made sustained progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision.

4 The College continues to develop the areas of good practice arising from the review visit in May 2012, including the use of higher education and professional benchmarks in setting and maintaining academic standards. The facilities in the purpose-built teaching clinic continue to be enhanced and are highly valued by students. The student mentoring scheme continues and includes the mentoring of new students by second-year student mentors.

5 The College has implemented effective policies and arrangements to engage students in quality assurance and enhancement. Students are represented on the Board of Governors and all academic committees and subcommittees, including the Staff Student Liaison Subcommittee (SSLSc). The Students' Union officers are elected by the student body, and provide the committee representatives. Student year representatives provide

a conduit for feedback and reporting back, as well as student voice workshops and focus groups, such as the Learning Services focus group. Students confirmed that they are engaged in decision-making processes and can see improvements as a result of student involvement. However, they are disappointed that there is not more staff engagement with the annual student-led Teaching Excellence Awards organised by the Students' Union. The College obtains individual student feedback through a range of surveys; results are discussed at the SSLSc and Academic Development and Quality Committee (ADQC), and action plans are made.

6 Students spoke positively about the support available from staff; however, they did identify the need for the College to develop a system for publishing staff availability and their preferred method of contact. This has been discussed at the SSLSc and the College is looking to put into place arrangements to address this issue.

7 The College continues to develop its student record system. A new in-house system has been introduced and work is ongoing to enable cohort and equal opportunities monitoring and the generation of reports, with a deadline of December 2016, in preparation for achieving taught degree awarding powers (TDAP). Currently, the College has a UCAS data file for each student and uses the statistical data produced by its validating partner. This enables the monitoring of a variety of student data, which is discussed at assessment boards, reported in the annual quality report and monitored by the ADQC.

8 The College has instigated a number of initiatives towards establishing a strategic approach to the dissemination of good academic practice. The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy was reviewed and revised in 2015, with the addition of an implementation plan with success indicators. The aims include ensuring that all staff are appropriately qualified, supported and developed, and activities in place include an online Essential Skills in Medical Education Certificate for all staff without teaching experience and termly staff development sessions. The sessions provide an opportunity for staff to share good practice, including teaching and learning approaches, and are well received by staff. The introduction of a peer observation of teaching policy has been delayed, but is currently being piloted with a view to full implementation in 2016-17. The scheme will enable sharing of good practice between observing pairs of colleagues, and wider dissemination through an annual report for the Learning and Teaching Subcommittee. The annual review of the institutional learning and teaching strategy has been delayed to coincide with other strategic developments.

9 Development of e-learning support is ongoing, with a gradual transition to one virtual learning environment (VLE) serving all programmes. The VLE enables access to all electronic resources such as video tutorials, the library, email, and documentation and procedures. Currently, programme and unit pages are at various stages of development, as each unit leader controls the layout and content of webpages for their unit, within the minimum requirements set by the Learning and Teaching Subcommittee. It is anticipated that protocols for a standardised format will be established in 2016-17, following the appointment in May 2016 of the newly redesignated post of E-Learning Developer. Students confirmed that the content is useful although they have experienced some confusion over where to find information due to the transition between platforms.

10 The admissions process is thorough, with policies and requirements for entry clearly displayed on the College website. The College has its own admissions regulations and procedures for undergraduate chiropractic programmes and follows the regulations and procedures for part-time MSc and PG Cert programmes of its validating body, Bournemouth University. Students for whom English is a second language are required to achieve the minimum International English Language Testing System academic score, ranging from 6.0 to 7.0 depending on programme level. Following enrolment, English language support

is available in the College either through tutor or student self-referral. Applicants for the chiropractic programme undergo selection interviews at the College or through video-conferencing, to check their suitability and intention to study. Applicants for postgraduate programmes are usually healthcare professionals with a clear commitment to study, and undergo an online application process. Students observed that there had been significant improvements in the information available through the admissions pages on the College website over recent years, and that the admissions process is smoothly operated by the admissions team. The College provides a formal induction process for all students, including a targeted session for international chiropractic students, which covers both academic and pastoral elements. The process is revised in response to student feedback.

11 The College has systematic and effective processes for the monitoring and review of programmes. It follows the policies and procedures of Bournemouth University, which entail annual monitoring and periodic review. Unit monitoring reports and year tutor reports are prepared annually for the programme leader, who produces the annual framework report and action plan using a standard template, and taking account of external examiner reports, student feedback, and student progression data. Reports are submitted to ADQC and the Academic Board, which maintains strategic oversight of student and programme performance, and the action plan is kept under review by the programme steering group. In addition to annual reporting to Bournemouth University, the College also reports annually to professional and accreditation bodies. Through these processes, the College has effective information gathering and review at unit and programme level, and uses the outcomes to enhance learning at unit level. However, College processes do not readily show how deliberate steps are taken to use the outcomes of programme monitoring and review to enhance the overall quality of the student learning experience.

12 The annual monitoring processes enable the College to draw upon qualitative and quantitative information to maintain oversight of student and programme performance. For example, a review of student progression, retention and achievement data identified that retention rates are typically greater than 80 per cent, with the exception of the MSc Ultrasound programme where retention in 2013-14 and 2014-15 was respectively 77 per cent and 72 per cent. The College has investigated progression and completion on part-time MSc programmes and has established that the reasons for withdrawal or suspension of study are typically due to a change in students' professional or personal circumstances, and that they choose to exit with a PG Cert or PG Dip rather than complete the research element of the degree. The investigation has helped the College understand the position more clearly; however, it has yet to develop an action plan based on this.

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

13 As indicated in paragraph 4, the College continues to align its provision with higher education and professional benchmarks through the design and validation of programmes by its validating partner and in professional accreditation. The College secured Institutional Designation in March 2016 and has also undergone the TDAP scrutiny process, and is expecting to hear the outcome of its application in July 2016. (Note: subsequent to the annual monitoring visit, the College received confirmation of TDAP as at 24 May 2016.)

14 The College engages with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education in a systematic way through a programme of thematic academic audits. The audits inform the College action plan, for example on staff development activities, and a recent audit of *Chapter B7: External Examining* has resulted in encouragement of staff to take up external examiner roles.

## **5 Background to the monitoring visit**

15 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.

16 The monitoring visit was carried out by Dr Elaine Crosthwaite (Reviewer) and Mr Mike Ridout (Coordinator) on 17 May 2016.

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