

## Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, June 2013

### Annex 3: Keele University International Study Centre

#### Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the monitoring team concludes that Keele University International Study Centre (KUISC) is making progress but further improvement is required following the May 2012 [Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight](#).

#### Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 Student numbers at KUISC increased from 119 in 2012 to 205 in 2013. In response to this increase, KUISC has employed additional sessional teaching staff. In April 2013 KUISC moved into new premises located near the main University campus.

#### Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 KUISC is continuing to provide a high level of academic and pastoral support for students and opportunities for high-quality staff development. Staff continue to access the structured networking arrangements that are offered across the network of International Study Centres.

4 Responsibility for academic standards of provision is made clear in a Form of Variation to the inter-institutional agreement with the University. KUISC has produced a glossary of terms defining the meanings of academic standards-related terms and is applying these consistently. This glossary has been circulated to staff at this ISC and there is a consistent understanding about the status of KUISC programmes and where responsibility for academic standards lies.

5 Work has been undertaken to develop KUISC's assessment regulations in line with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), but these regulations were incomplete and unclear, particularly about the pass mark and requirements for progression at different levels. There is inconsistent staff understanding regarding the pass mark to be awarded to students who achieve the threshold level of the intended learning outcomes at module level. At the start of the 2012-13 academic year, the assessment regulations had not been fully communicated to students in writing through the student handbooks. Written information subsequently provided to students, through KUISC's virtual learning environment, give an abridged version of the regulations, but notable omissions include a clear statement of the module pass mark, the compensation rules and the opportunity to restart the programme following academic failure.

6 Information on the KUISC website about progression requirements stated that students' progression to the second year of their chosen University degree programme is assured. Some students stated that, before they arrived at KUISC, they were informed by recruitment agents that they were assured of progression to the second year of their chosen

degree programme at the University. It was confirmed in a meeting with senior staff that agents receive the same information as that provided on the public-facing website. Bellerbys Educational Services (BES) standard procedures for checking and confirming the accuracy of information, prior to sign-off by the University, are not being implemented in full and rigorously at KUISC.

#### **Section 4: The embedded colleges' use of external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education**

7 KUISC has worked with the Quality Code in developing learning, teaching and assessment and a quality handbook which it intends to implement prior to 2013-14.

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

8 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's and its embedded colleges' continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress with the action plan since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider and its embedded colleges of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

9 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Alan Hunt, QAA Officer, and Professor Graham Romp, Reviewer, on 4 June 2013.