Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (Study Group UK)

Kingston University London International Study Centre

May 2016

Contents

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Kingston University London International Study Centre. The review took place from 12 to 13 May 2016 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Professor Donald Pennington
- Professor Gaynor Taylor.

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provided by Kingston University London International Study Centre and to make judgements as to whether or not its academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)[1] setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
  - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
  - the quality of student learning opportunities
  - the information provided about higher education provision
- provides a commentary on the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- provides a commentary on the selected theme
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the Centre is taking or plans to take.

In Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) there is also a check on Bellerbys Educational Sevices Ltd's (Study Group) financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG). This check has the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure of their education provider.

A summary of the findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 5.

In reviewing Kingston University London International Study Centre the review team has also considered a theme selected for particular focus across higher education in England and Northern Ireland. The themes for the academic year 2015-16 are Digital Literacies and Student Employability,[2] and Study Group is required to select, in consultation with student representatives, one of these themes to be explored through the review process.

The QAA website gives more information about QAA and its mission.[3] A dedicated section explains the method for Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges).[4] For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code
[2] Higher Education Review themes:
www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=106
[3] QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.
[4] Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers):
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Pages/Educational-Oversight-.aspx

Key findings

QAA's judgements about Kingston University London International Study Centre

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at Kingston University London International Study Centre (KULIS).

- The maintenance of the academic standards of the awards offered on behalf of Study Group and of KULIS's degree-awarding body **meets** UK expectations
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of Study Group's information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of **good practice** at Kingston University London International Study Centre:

- the extensive level of information provided to external examiners to help ensure academic standards are met and maintained (Expectatins B7and A3.4).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** Kingston University London International Study Centre.

By April 2017:

- analyse the reasons for non-progression to better inform appropriate student support mechanisms (Expectation B4).

Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team **affirms** the following actions that the Kingston University London International Study Centre is already taking to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to its students:

- the recent introduction of the operation group to improve oversight of the management of programmes (Expectation A2.1)
- the steps being taken to use the red/amber/green system to monitor student progress (Expectation B4).

Enhancement of student learning opportunities

The Centre has taken a number of deliberate steps to enhance the quality of its provision. Examples included the use of the red/amber/green (RAG) status to support student progression, the introduction of more off-site learning experiences and the use of a bespoke video-sharing channel to record talks. Enhancements arise from a variety of feedback processes and actions to implement them are added to the Centre Action Plan which is regularly monitored and updated.

Theme: Student Employability

Kingston University International Study Centre is in the process of implementing Study Group's CareerAhead initiative. The aim is to enhance employability of students by supporting them to have a career direction of travel, an understanding of how graduate recruiters assess applicants for jobs, develop a CV and personal statement and develop a personal career plan.

The Centre's Action Plan identifies improving employability information for students and requires the Centre to create an additional section to programme specifications to provide employability information. Some business modules will contain a significant work placement component in the 2016-17 academic year and students on the International year one programme will be participating in Kingston University's Business Readiness initiative.

Further explanation of the key findings can be found in the handbook available on the QAA webpage explaining Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges).

About University of Kingston University London International Study Centre

Kingston University London International Study Centre (KUISC) opened in 2010 and has expanded steadily over the last six years. Currently there are approximately 145 learners enrolled on programmes validated by Kingston University (the University); The International Foundation Year (IFY), International Year One (IY1) and the Pre-Master's programmes (PMP). Academic staff numbers currently include two full-time and 13 part-time members.

There have been a number of staff changes over recent years. The current Head of Centre has been in place since April 2015, and the senior team has undergone a restructure, with the appointment of a Deputy Head of Centre. This post replaced the IFY Programme Manager position from August 2014. A quality lead was appointed to assist with designing and implementing new quality procedures. Study Group has also appointed a designated safeguarding lead at KULISC to provide academic and welfare support to all students, but in particular 17 year olds.

Kingston University London implemented a new Revised Academic Framework (RAF) with an altered assessment structure and content. All validated courses at KULISC were required to align with these changes by first delivery in the academic year 2013-14. At the beginning of the academic year 2014-15, the host faculty of KULISC was transferred from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) to the Faculty of Business and Law (FBL). This change resulted in the appointment of a new Academic Liaison Officer.

KULISC received a QAA monitoring visit in June 2014 as part of the Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight process and was found to be making commendable progress. There have been two further review processes over the last 12 months; Study Group's Centre Review, which took place in February of 2015, and the University's Internal Subject Review, which occurred over two days in March 2015.

Each of these separate reviews are reflected in the current Centre Action Plan where key themes are identified. The Centre's current priorities include improving student engagement and student outcomes, developing a student enhancement strategy, responding to external examiners and staff development.

Explanation of the findings about Kingston University London International Study Centre

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a brief glossary at the end of this report. A fuller glossary of terms is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the review method, also on the QAA website.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies

Expectation (A1): In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* are met by:

- **positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications**
- **naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications**
- **awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes**

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics

c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework

d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Quality Code, *Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.1 Study Group is not a degree-awarding body, and does not offer credit. However, its programmes are benchmarked, during initial development and at approval and re-approval (or validation and revalidation according to the specific partnership academic arrangement) against *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), for programmes set at levels 4-6, and against the Regulated Qualifications Framework for preparatory programmes set at level 3. It uses the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR) for English programmes.

1.2 Programmes at KUISC are validated by the partner Kingston University using that institution's validation procedures and regulatory framework. There are three types of programme; International Foundation Year (IFY) which is pre-university and validated at level 3, International Year 1 (IF1) which allows direct entry to year 2 of business and management courses and is validated at level 4, and a Pre-master's Programme (PMP) validated at levels 5 and 6. English modules are validated by Study Group.

1.3 The design of the processes in place allows the Expectation to be met.

1.4   The review team tested KULISC's approach to meeting this Expectation by reviewing validation documents and programme specifications for the programmes offered. Meetings were also held with senior, academic and support staff.

1.5   Validation reports for the International Foundation Year, the Pre-master's Programme and for International Year One in Business confirmed that the programmes had been considered in terms of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the Quality Code. No explicit reference was made to the Regulated Qualifications Framework for the first of these, but the report discussed the content of subject specific modules with respect to progression onto the first year of a range of Kingston University courses indicating both content and level were appropriate. Validation panels included two external members from higher education institutions.

1.6   Programme specifications provide learning outcomes phrased to reflect the level of the programme and a mapping between learning outcomes and modules.

1.7   Based on the documentary evidence provided the review team concludes that through its adherence to the partner university's validation processes KULISC takes appropriate account of external reference points in securing threshold academic standards and that the embedded college meets the Expectation with a low level of associated risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.8   Programmes offered at KULISC are validated by Kingston University. As such, the Centre adopts the regulations and procedures of Kingston University. KULISC has a governance structure, academic framework and set of regulations that reflect the relationship between Study Group, the Centre and Kingston University.

1.9   The operation of the programmes within the academic frameworks and regulations of the University and Study Group would allow the Expectation to be met. The review tested this Expectation by scrutiny of documentation and meetings with senior staff.

1.10   A Steering Group, chaired by a senior member of staff from the University, operates effectively and feeds into the Centre's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group (QAEG), chaired by the Head of the Centre. This reports through to the Regional Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group (RQAEG). The latter reports through to Study Group's Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (AQAEC). The Centre has recently introduced an operation group, which meets on a regular basis and deals with matters to do with the day-to-day management of programmes. The operation group has helped further formalise meetings of University and Centre staff involved directly with the programmes. This ensures emerging issues are dealt with as they arise and responded to quickly, which ensures the smooth running of programmes and their associated modules. In view of this, the review team **affirms** that the recent introduction of the operation group will improve oversight of the management of programmes.

1.11   KULISC's Board of Studies has a membership drawn from both the Centre and the University and is chaired by the Head of Centre. The Board receives reports from the Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) and the Teaching Review and Enhancement Committee. These committees meet regularly and fulfil their remits according to their terms of reference.

1.12   Variances from standard Kingston University regulations are detailed in the University's approved variances record. Consistent with the University's management of partnerships, an Academic Liaison Officer acts as the main point of contact for the Centre with respect to guidance on the University's regulations and quality assurance policies and procedures. Kingston University's Liaison Document describes in sufficient detail the specific liaison arrangements that operate for partnerships and associated awards.

1.13   There are clear and effectively operating frameworks and regulations governing how programmes are run and that provide for progression to programmes with credit and qualification awarded by the University. KULISC's governance arrangements for the management and oversight of programmes seem appropriate and from the minutes supplied are operating effectively.

1.14   The review team concludes that there are appropriate and effective frameworks and regulations governing the programmes offered at KULISC and validated by the University. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

Quality Code, *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*

Findings

1.15   The University validates programmes offered by KULISC and keeps a definitive record of each programme along with the progression requirements. Study Group also maintains a record of each programme offered by the Centre. The programme specifications detail the aims of the programme, its structure and the module learning outcomes.

1.16   The definitive record of each programme and their constituent modules would allow the Expectation to be met. The review team tested this Expectation by scrutiny of documentation and meetings with senior staff from the University, Study Group and the Centre.

1.17   Study Group, the University and KULISC maintain full, detailed and up-to-date definitive records of each programme specification and associated module specifications. Study Group is in the process of introducing a new definitive document called a Centre Specification. The Centre Specification will record additional information about KULISC, including programme entry requirements, external examiners, progression awards and entry requirements at the University.

1.18   At Study Group-level, the Programme Approval and Validation Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, maintains effective oversight of programmes offered at KULISC and has the responsibility of recording amendments to programmes of study.

1.19   The review team concludes that there is effective maintenance of a definitive record of each programme at the Centre, through the validation arrangements with the University and by oversight of the Study Group. Therefore, Expectation A2.2 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.20   Programmes at KULISC are designed by its staff, working with University staff to ensure articulation with the progression routes offered, and validated by the University using its validation procedures.

1.21   The design of the validation process would meet the Expectation.

1.22   The review team examined validation documents and programme specifications for the programmes offered. Meetings were also held with senior, academic and support staff.

1.23   Both validation panels included two external members from other higher education institutions, although in the case of the International Foundation Year and the Pre-master's course both appear to be English language, rather than subject, specialists. Validation reports for International Foundation Year and the Pre-master's Programme and for International Year One in Business confirmed that the programmes had been considered in terms of the FHEQ and that they met the threshold standards for the appropriate levels.

1.24   Programme specifications provide learning outcomes phrased to reflect the level of the programme and a mapping between learning outcomes and modules.

1.25   Based on the documentary evidence provided, the review team concludes that Study Group consistently implements the University's processes for the approval of taught programmes. This ensures that academic standards are set at a level that meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with the partner university's academic framework and regulations. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied**.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.26   Programmes offered by KULISC are benchmarked against the FHEQ or the Regulated Education Qualifications (previously the National Qualifications Framework). The former is used for programmes set at levels 4 to 6, and the latter for programmes set at level 3. The assessment process operated by KULISC, including the use of internal moderation, oversight by the University, and the use of external examiners ensure academic standards through achievement of learning outcomes.

1.27   The processes adopted to ensure threshold academic standards are met would enable Expectation A3.2 to be met. The review team examined relevant documentary evidence and held meetings with senior staff and teaching staff responsible for assessment.

1.28   The International Foundation Year programme specification is explicitly benchmarked against level 3 criteria. The University maintains oversight and validates programmes against Subject Benchmarks Statements, where appropriate and the FHEQ at Level 4.

1.29   The assessment process is thorough. It ensures that the programme and module learning outcomes have been met at threshold standards when the student is deemed to have passed the assessments associated with the module, and has passed all modules that make up the programme. Assessments for English and academic subjects adhere to the University's assessment regulations. Module Assessment Board and Programme Assessment Board meetings operate effectively, confirm threshold standards have been met and confirm marks and achievement of students at both module and programme levels. These boards are chaired by a senior member of the faculty from the University and are attended by external examiners. Formal assessments are mapped to learning outcomes and enable students to demonstrate that they have attained the learning outcomes of the module. This provides transparency for students in terms of understanding what has to be achieved in order to pass the module and the programme.

1.30   There are effective and appropriate assessment processes in operation to ensure that module and programme learning outcome are met and academic standards are satisfied. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation A3.2 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.31   All programmes are reviewed annually using the University's annual monitoring and enhancement process. This uses a suite of key monitoring information, including external examiner reports and responses, course performance data, module reports and course reports submitted to the Board of Study as they become available rather than as a single monitoring report. In addition, the University uses a process termed Internal Subject Review to assure itself that the academic standards of its awards are being met. Study Group also introduced centre reviews, which include oversight of academic standards. Actions arising from these processes are included in the Centre Action Plan.

1.32   The design of these processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.33   The review team examined the reports from the Centre Review, the Internal Subject Review, a completed module review form, annual course reports, and an external examiner's report.

1.34   The main vehicle to allow the Board of Studies annual oversight of standards is receipt of external examiner reports, which explicitly request comments on standards. Minutes of the Board of Studies demonstrated that there had been discussion of external examiner issues. Module reports are prepopulated with course data and require a commentary on this which may include issues concerning standards, although the system is new and no such comments were made in the example provided. The alignment of module reviews with those of the University and their receipt by the Board of Study was noted by the Head of Centre as an enhancement to ensure quality

1.35   Course reports do not explicitly refer to standards and there was no information in those received. The summary report submitted to RQAEG is simply a data compilation and, although RQAEG and Study Group see Board of Studies minutes as well, the review team considers that Study Group will have better oversight once its own annual monitoring process is fully in place.

1.36   Internal Subject Review is a partner university process 'to periodically review all fields in a subject area as a means of assuring itself that the academic standards of its awards are being appropriately met and that the quality of the student experience for those studying for its awards is appropriate'. The review takes place with a panel including a member external to both the University and KULISC, and includes a reaffirmation of curriculum content and consideration of standards. The latter was subject to this process in 2015 with no major issues raised concerning standards.

1.37   Centre Review is a Study Group process designed to give an overview of each centre's operations and includes consideration of academic standards. In the initial round all centres were reviewed but further reviews will be scheduled according to a risk-based assessment. KULISC received its Centre Review in 2015; recommendations concerning standards included the need to submit annual monitoring information in a timely way and to

urgently appoint a new external examiner for one subject area. Each of these recommendations has been complied with.

1.38   The team considers that, in implementing the processes described above, KULISC meets the University's and Study Group's requirements for the monitoring and review of programmes with respect to standards. The Expectation is therefore met by KULISC with a low level of associated risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained**.

Quality Code, *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*

Findings

1.39   Programmes offered by the KULISC are benchmarked against the FHEQ or the Regulated Education Qualifications. The former is used for programmes set at levels 4 to 6, and the latter for programmes set at level 3. External and independent academic expertise is used for programme validation by the University, programme review and the periodic Centre Review process. External examiners are appointed by the University for programmes and modules run at KULISC.

1.40   The use of external and independent expertise as identified above would enable Expectation 3.4 to be met.

1.41   The review team tested the operation of these processes by examining relevant documentary evidence, including external examiner reports and programme approval notes. Meetings were held with both senior and academic staff.

1.42   Validation of programmes by the University operate with independent external expertise and the notes of the validation events demonstrate a thorough process for the consideration of programmes to ensure that academic standards are appropriately set. KULISC's internal moderation process combined with the external examiner system ensures that threshold academic standards are delivered, achieved and maintained through the assessment process. Each programme at KULISC has an appointed external examiner whose role is to oversee academic standards and ensure that threshold academic standards are set and maintained at the right level and achieved where students pass modules and their programme of study. The full and detailed information provided to external examiners through the use of module boxes is good practice and is commented on further under Expectation B7: external examining.

1.43   Overall, there is clear, effective and thorough use of independent external expertise at key stages of setting, meeting and maintaining UK threshold academic standards. The review team concludes that Expectation 3.4 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of degree-awarding bodies: Summary of findings

1.44   In reaching its judgement about the maintenance of academic standards, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook.

1.45   All seven of the Expectations in this area are met and the level of associated risk for each is low. KULISC effectively follows the requirements of the University to maintain academic standards and these processes are supported by KULISC's own internal procedures and guidance.

1.46   There is one affirmation, relating to expectation A2.1 and the improved oversight of the management of programmes that is likely to result from the introduction of a new Operation Group. Although situated primarily within Expectation B7, there is also good practice identified under Expectation A3.4 which recognises the extensive level of information that is provided to external examiners.

1.47   The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered **meets** UK expectations.

2   Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes

Quality Code, *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*

Findings

2.1   As the University validates programmes, it also has responsibility for oversight of academic standards. The University's guidance and supervision, in conjunction with KULISC's internal processes, ensure that programmes meet the quality expectations of both the University and Study Group. Changes and developments to programmes are discussed between Study Group, KULISC and the University.

2.2   The processes described above would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.3   The review team examined documentation and reports from the validation of the KULISC courses. In addition, meetings were held with KULISC and University staff.

2.4   Programmes are developed and designed in conjunction with both Study Group and the University to prepare students for entry onto a range of university courses as noted in A1 above. Initial approval for development must be granted by Study Group's Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (AQAEC) (a lead role in such approval is now taken by the new Programme Approval and Validation Subcommittee, reporting to AQAEC). KULISC programmes are all validated by the University using that institution's processes for collaborative partners.

2.5   Validation reports for all the programmes demonstrate consideration of both quality and standards issues. Panels included two external members in addition to University staff. Staff who met with the review team and who had been involved with module development confirmed that the International Foundation Year had been designed to correspond to the first year of the progression courses at the university - students follow the same four modules as the University's students plus English and a business readiness module.

2.6   Programme design, development and approval processes are robust and in line with those of the University. Hence, the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*

Findings

2.7   Study Group is responsible for the recruitment and admission of students. All students recruited and admitted to programmes offered at KULISC are overseas students requiring a UK Visas and Immigration Tier 4 licence to study. The admission process is centrally managed by Study Group and is conducted according to the recently implemented Admissions Policy. KULISC reviews the admissions requirements in collaboration with the University and follow due process at both the University and Study Group before changes are made. The website provides information to prospective students concerning programmes available and progression details.

2.8   The admissions systems and processes, including policies and procedures, would enable Expectation B2 to be met.

2.9   To test this, the review team scrutinised relevant admissions policy and procedure documents, website information for prospective students, and met a range of senior and professional support staff and current students.

2.10   Study Group recently restructured the admissions process by separating the offer-issuing phase, application to offer, and the Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) phase required by UK Visas and Immigration. The former is now entirely managed at a hub in Singapore and the latter in the UK. Approved and up-to-date entry requirements are provided on programme specifications

2.11   Exceptional or borderline cases are referred by Study Group to KULISC for recommendation and decision over whether or not to offer the prospective student a place. The Head of Centre liaises with the Deputy Head of Centre and the Head of English and communicates a decision back to Study Group. Borderline applicant cases are often to do with partially missing the English threshold or not having taken a science subject.

2.12   Changes to entry requirements for programmes offered at the Centre are discussed between the Head of Centre and the University faculty. Changes agreed between the Centre and University faculty are then approved at University level through a committee process. Study Group approves and implements any changes following approval by the AQAEC. The Steering Committee must agree any changes before they are discussed and agreed with Study Group. These processes are effective and thorough, and ensure that changes to entry requirements are fully considered by the Centre, University and Study Group.

2.13   Upon arrival at KULISC, all students are provided with a thorough induction, which takes place according to the schedule detailed in the Centre Handbook. The Head of Centre is responsible for organising and leading the induction. Academic staff at KULISC and representatives from the University also contribute to the student induction process. Students are provided a copy of the detailed Student Handbook and made aware of key aspects at induction. Staff are made aware of their responsibilities, which are stated in the Staff Handbook. Students report a high degree of satisfaction with the induction they receive and find it helps them at both KULISC and the University.

2.14 Prospective students are able to make an appeal against a decision concerning their application to study at an International Study Centre and programme of choice through the Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy. This policy also provides guidance on how a student can make a complaint about some aspect of the admissions process conducted by Study Group, in either Singapore or the UK. The Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy clearly sets out grounds and the eligibility for appeal. Study Group's Admissions Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring that appeals and complaints are dealt with according to Study Group's policy and stated timescales.

2.15 Overall, the review team confirms that there is an effective admissions policy and that the Centre works closely with both the University and Study Group for admission of students to its programmes. The review team therefore concludes that Expectation B2 is met in practice and the associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.16   KULISC collects information on the effectiveness of its teaching methods in a number of ways, including external examiners reports, observation of teaching and annual staff evaluation, the module review system and peer review. Information gathered is translated into actions to improve modules through module review and development plans. These actions are monitored through the Centre Action Plan and discussed at the Teaching Review and Enhancement Committee and the QAEG. The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.17   The review team considered the full range of documentation noted above and met both senior and academic staff.

2.18   KULISC's approach to learning and teaching is articulated in the centre handbook.The Centre Director was aware of the requirement that the embedded college produce a learning and teaching strategy in line with Study Group's framework by September 2016. KULISC currently uses the University's strategy and there will need to be interlinking between the two.

2.19   It was noted that all staff are qualified to master's level with the majority of staff holding doctorates and possessing Postgraduate Certificates in Education or equivalent teaching qualifications.

2.20   The review team was informed that there are two observations of teaching each year. Observation that feeds into performance evaluation is carried out by management for consistency. In addition, peer observation allows the sharing of best practice with deliberate pairing of different subjects. Observations are reported on a standard form and the examples given were helpful and constructively critical. Staff who met the review team indicated that they enjoyed the peer observation process as it involves sharing practice and styles of delivery and interactions with students across cohorts and subjects. The reflective process afterwards was viewed as rewarding.

2.21   English language provision is monitored across all International Study Centres (ISCs) by Study Group. The review team saw written feedback on several of the observations, which was clear, constructive and followed the same format as the subject observations.

2.22   Students reported that each mid-term, class representatives collect three positive statements and three improvements concerning their learning experience. These are submitted to the KULISC management and all students receive feedback on KULISC's response through an email from the tutor. Examples were given of this system working in practice including asking for more group work during classes and for a change of format for two hour classes from the purely didactic to include a range of presentation and debates. In both cases, KULISC had responded with the mid-term feedback, allowing change to occur for the current student cohort.

2.23 Further examples of enhancement of teaching practice resulting from student requests are given in sets of minutes of the Staff Student Liaison Committee, which recorded concerns with different teaching practices within a module and with the learning experience, particularly timing of classes and of assessments. The minutes recorded the action taken in each case.

2.24 The Teaching Review and Enhancement Committee takes an overview of teaching and learning with an agenda that includes staff development as a standing item. Minutes of the November meeting noted that Study Group's Director of Teaching and Learning would be present at a staff development event in December. A range of staff development opportunities are in place including 'Inset' days held at the beginning and end of every term, which include a focus on continuing professional development.

2.25 The wide range of opportunities to receive feedback and the evidence that action is taken following such feedback demonstrate that the Expectation is met with low level of associated risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*

Findings

2.26   Availability and access to resources are agreed with the partner University and reviewed by the Centre Review process.

2.27   Progression rates have always been seen as a key performance indicator for ISCs. Until recently, these were considered individually by centres. There is now a central Progression Steering Group in place to monitor and report on student retention and achievement across the network of ISCs. A review of the pilot tracking system during summer 2015 culminated in a framework being established that agreed a systematic and common process for tracking student achievement and retention across the network. This utilises standard definitions of student achievement and assigns a red/amber/green (RAG) status to monitor progression

2.28   Diagnostic testing in mathematics and English language is mandatory on arrival to make sure each student is on a suitable programme of study. Progress throughout the year is then monitored with additional support provided to those students in danger of failing to meet progression requirements for their chosen university course.

2.29   All students are provided with opportunities to engage with personal development planning (PDP) This is principally achieved through the English Skills for University Study (ESUS) framework of English Language tuition, but local centres may offer additional elements of PDP provision through other modules or personal tutorials

2.30   These activities would allow the Expectation to be met

2.31   The team reviewed a range of documentation, including the contract with the partner University, the report of Study Group's Centre Review, the report of the University's Internal Subject Review and papers referring to progression rates. Meetings were also held with the Head of Centre and staff.

2.32   The contract with the University confirms that students at KULISC have associate student union membership and hence access to all facilities and services offered by the Kingston University Students' Union. They also have access to a range of support services on the same basis as the University's students, including sports centre membership, chaplaincy, health centre registration, counselling, disability support, and library and IT access.

2.33   The Centre Review process checks the collaborative arrangements with university partners, such as access to libraries and opportunities for students to engage with the university through activities that focus on the university environment as a resource for learning. Centre review also includes scrutiny of staffing levels, academic support available, the efficacy of personal tutorial systems and the resourcing of teaching and learning, for example the virtual learning environment (VLE) employed, specific learning resources such as interactive whiteboards and classrooms. The review for KULISC made a number of recommendations, those relating directly to Expectation B4 included renaming the tutorial sessions group tutorials to reflect their nature and, in addition, including one to one personal tutorial sessions in students' timetables. The Centre Action Plan notes that a revision of the tutorial process treating it as a module with module box and resources has been completed.

The Student Handbook gives a clear explanation of group tutorials, but makes no mention of one-to-one sessions. However, it does signpost students to contact information for the University's well-being services which are also covered in group tutorials. The partner University's Internal Subject Review led to an action to review the Personal Tutor Scheme during the current academic year with proposals for further training to be made available to personal tutors.

2.34   KULISC plans to further enhance the group tutorials for 2016-17 by introducing an employability framework where students will be required to undertake an online skills assessment which will enable them to consider and reflect upon their learning needs with regards to particular employability skills acquisition.

2.35   Recent initiatives include the introduction of a range of offsite learning experiences such as visits to appropriate industries and use of a dedicated video-sharing channel to record presentations such as those used during induction.

2.36   The number of students from all programmes actually progressing to the partner university, although it showed year-on-year improvement, was relatively low at 64 per cent for 2014-15. The Centre has an internal target of 70 per cent. The review team notes that (as a percentage of those who completed), only around half (56 per cent in 2014-15) of IY1 had achieved the necessary progression grades and around 25 per cent of students had failed to complete.

2.37   Study Group's framework for tracking progression throughout a student's course has been introduced this year. The RAG Register is updated twice a term from mid and end of term reports as well as tutors and Students views considered at the QAEG. This informs the intervention to be taken. Targeted Progression Support sessions are then offered to provide an extra layer of academic and pastoral support to students at risk of non-progression. Students receive an action plan, formulating agreed targets, and the option of a one to one session with the Head of Centre. Examples were given of extra classes in finance and additional English tuition. While it is too early to evaluate the RAG process, current predictions are for over 70 per cent of students to qualify for progression to the partner university this year.

2.38   The grades required for progression are above those required to pass the programmes so a number of students in any cohort will pass, but not progress. The review team enquired what happened to such students. They learned that, although the University's regulations allow only one resit, an agreed and formalised variance in these regulations allows up to two retakes of any module for IFY and this is implied, but not stated explicitly in the Student Handbook. There is no variance for IY1 students. Students who met the review team were aware of their opportunities to resit. There was, however, no quantitative or qualitative information concerning the destinations of the group of students who after exhausting the opportunities available still failed to meet progression grades. KULISC does not keep records of students who go on to enrol in higher education elsewhere. While the review team **affirms** the steps being taken to use the RAG system to monitor student progress, it also **recommends** that KULISC analyses the reasons for non-progression to better inform appropriate student support mechanisms.

2.39   All students have access to the University's VLE. There are minimum content requirements for each module and staff are supported in meeting these by a set of outlines suggesting how a subject folder might be organised. A recent audit of modules shows that in some cases there is still work to be done with respect to meeting the minimum content requirements and ensuring these are up to date.

2.40   The processes in place allow the Expectation to be met in practice, but the lack of analysis of students who fail to progress is seen by the review team to be of moderate risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*

Findings

2.41   KULISC provides a number of opportunities for students to engage collaboratively with the centre during the course of their programmes. These include the election of student representatives, the student staff consultative committee (SSCC), group tutorial sessions and the module review process.

2.42   These opportunities would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.43   The team considered evidence from the minutes of Staff Student Consultative Committee, documents describing module feedback and met groups of staff and students.

2.44   Student representatives are elected from each cohort. Representatives who met the review team were enthusiastic about their role, explaining that there had been multiple volunteers leading to a competitive election process in which they had been required to make a presentation. Representatives were asked to attend a training session, run by the University's Students' Union, to explain leadership styles and so on. The sessions included attendance by partner university student representatives. Emails provided to the review team suggested few ISC representatives had attended such training, but senior staff explained that there had been timing issues which were subsequently resolved and most representatives have now had training. Student representatives who met the review team confirmed that most had undertaken the training and a video was available online for those unable to attend. Representatives are given time during group tutorials to discuss issues with their classmates and feedback responses following committee meetings.

2.45   One student attends not only the QAEG (as required by Study Group), but also the Board of Studies. The review team noted the increased opportunity for student engagement although it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of this increased representation.

2.46   Minutes from the SSLC demonstrated that a range of issues had been addressed.

2.47   Qualitative feedback on modules is collected via a series of module reviews described in the University's Student Engagement and Feedback processes. Reviews are conducted throughout the module. For each review, the student representative for a class holds an open forum so that the class can decide what areas they want to highlight in each module. Students confirmed this, reporting that class representatives collect three positive statements and three improvements concerning their learning experience. These are submitted to the centre management and all students receive feedback on the college's response through an email from the appropriate tutor. The review team was provided with a sample response and students reported asking for more group work during classes and for a change of format for two hour classes from the purely didactic to include a range of presentation and debates. In both cases the Centre had responded, the mid-term feedback allowing change to occur for the current student cohort.

2.48   KULISC offers a range of processes, which allow students to participate in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The Expectation is met with a low level of associated risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Quality Code, *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*

Findings

2.49　　Assessments at KUISC are developed and managed through adherence to Kingston University's Assessment Regulations and the University's revised academic framework and grade criteria. This includes the English and the International Foundation Year, International Year 1 and Pre-Master's programme. Study Group also details a set of expectations that provides consistency across its International Study Centres. These expectations ensure, for example, that each assessment is linked to module learning outcomes, students receive assessment criteria and all assignments have feedback sheets. Study Group is developing an assessment framework which will build upon existing expectations for assessment that it requires of its centres. External examiners are involved in both the setting and checking on academic standards of marked assessed work, including both coursework and examinations. KULISC does not operate a recognition of prior learning policy or procedure, in line with the general guidance of Study Group. KULISC's Centre Handbook provides detailed information about its assessment strategy and a mapping of the Indicators of the Quality Code, *Chapter B6*.

2.50　　The policies, procedures and systems used across the assessment process would enable Expectation B6 to be met.

2.51　　The review team scrutinised a range of policy and regulatory documents concerned with the assessment process, tested their effectiveness and operation, and held meetings with senior staff, representatives from the University, staff responsible for assessment and students.

2.52　　Detailed and useful information about assessment and assessment regulations is provided in the Centre's key handbooks, which include the Centre Handbook, Student Handbook and Staff Handbook. Students reported satisfaction with the information provided in the handbooks and module guides concerning the assessment process. The Centre fully involves external examiners in both the setting and checking on academic standards of summative assessed work, including both coursework and examinations. This includes assessments written by module tutors and reviewed by external examiners, assessments linked to learning outcomes and assessments published in module handbooks, which are given to students at the start of a module.

2.53　　Module leaders have responsibility for setting and marking assessments using grade criteria that they have developed. This is conducted according to the University's marking and moderation procedures. The Centre uses Module Boxes, which are the responsibility of Module Leaders to keep up to date and complete with required information, as central to the assessment process. The content of Module Boxes conforms to the Centre's requirements, which includes the module descriptor, coursework requirements, assessment criteria, guideline for markers and samples of student assessed work. Module boxes are an effective means of collecting together in one place a range of information about assessment for a module. Assessed work is first marked and moderated by Centre staff. Module boxes are used for the internal moderation process and moderation forms ensure that moderators refer to assessment schemes. Modules boxes are also used effectively in

the external examiner process to provide evidence that assessment is taking place according to the Centre's and the University's assessment regulations (see section B7).

2.54   Assessments set by the Centre's module leaders are submitted to external examiners for comment as well as undergoing a thorough internal moderation process,, overseen by an assigned internal moderator, before being given to students. External examiners are provided with samples of marked assessed work according to the University's requirements. External examiners comment on academic standards, the Centre's internal moderation process and the quality of feedback provided to students.

2.55   Feedback and marks for assessments must be returned to students within 10 working days and any delays must be explained to students and a revised deadline provided. Students report that the ten day turnaround deadline by the Centre is met and that any delay is explained to them. The Centre makes use of plagiarism-detection software to guard against academic malpractice. Students are able to submit an assignment to the plagiarism-detection software as a formative exercise before making a final submission of their work. Students find this helpful and understand issues concerning plagiarism.

2.56   Module and programme assessment boards are operated effectively in accordance with the University's academic regulations and procedures and are chaired by a senior member of staff from the appropriate faculty of the University. It is responsible for managing module and programme assessment boards through setting agendas, taking minutes and arranging meetings. Module Assessment Boards are responsible for confirming marks for each module and Programme Assessment Boards confirm the overall profile of marks for the students' programme of study and progression to the University's programmes. A record of results is issued to students, using Study Group's templates. The students' record of results shows marks achieved and modules passed for their year of study.

2.57   The University's academic regulations apply to KULISC. These cover areas such as mitigating circumstances, late submission of coursework policy and failure to submit, academic misconduct and plagiarism, and student disciplinary procedures. These are communicated to students through the Student Handbook and the Centre Handbook. Students are required to submit mitigating circumstances to the Head of Centre through a letter and accompanying evidence. Suspected cases of academic misconduct, plagiarism and collusion, are to be reported by the tutor to the Head of Centre, who will interview the student and decide upon how the case should be dealt with. These systems are understood by students and staff and operate effectively.

2.58   Study Group gains oversight of the assessment process and academic standards for KULISC through the annual monitoring report, which is considered at both the Regional Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group and Study Group's Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee.

2.59   Overall, the Centre effectively operates equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment. Therefore, the review team concludes that Expectation B6 is, and that the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.60 Study Group requires that all programmes at its International Study Centres have academic oversight from external examiners. Study Group regards this as an important way in which it benchmarks its provision against the appropriate level in the FHEQ and for identifying improvements and areas for enhancement.

2.61 Programmes offered at KULISC are validated by the University and, consequently, come under the University's academic rules and regulations. This includes external examiners being nominated and appointed by the University. External examiners are members of both module assessment boards and programme assessment boards. External examiners submit an annual report to both the Centre and the University.

2.62 The arrangements and use of the University's policies and procedures for external examiners would enable Expectation B7 to be met.

2.63 The review team scrutinised relevant documentary evidence, including the University's policies and regulations, and external examiner reports. The review team also met with academic and senior staff from both the Centre and the University.

2.64 The Board of Studies of KULISC offers suggestions to the University concerning appropriate potential external examiner nominations. The appointment of external examiners is the responsibility of the University and made through their procedures. External examiners play an active role with Heads of Units and module leaders throughout the academic cycle, particularly through reviewing module boxes on the day of assessment board meetings. External examiners are provided with comprehensive information about the programme and the modules, and given access to the information in detailed module boxes. The fullness of information provided to external examiners to help insure academic standards are met and maintained is **good practice**.

2.65 External examiners are consulted by Centre staff when proposing changes to module assessments and submit summative examinations for comment before being given to assess students. External examiners submit an annual report to both the Centre and the University. The reports are considered at Board of Study meetings, which has student representation. External examiner reports are made available to students through the VLE.

2.66 The Head of Centre works with the University's Academic Liaison Officer to respond to any issues raised by external examiners in their reports. Comments and issues raised by external examiners in their annual reports are incorporated into the Centre's Action Plan.

2.67 Study Group gains oversight of external examiner reports for KULISC through the annual monitoring report, which is considered at both the Regional Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group and Study Group's Academic Quality and Enhancement Committee.

2.68 The Centre, working in close liaison with the University and Study Group, makes effective and consistent use of external examiners to maintain academic standards and enhance the quality of the student learning experience. The review team, therefore, concludes that Expectation B7 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review*

Findings

2.69   As noted in section A3, all programmes are reviewed annually using the University's annual monitoring and enhancement process. This uses a suite of key monitoring information, including external examiner reports and responses, course performance data, module reports and course reports submitted to the Board of Study as they become available rather than a single monitoring report. In addition, the University uses a process termed Internal Subject Review and Study Group has introduced Centre Reviews. Both these processes include comment on both academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities and any actions arising are included in the Centre Action Plan.

2.70   These processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.71   The review team examined the reports from the Centre Review, the Internal Subject Review, a completed module review form, annual course reports, external examiners reports and an annual summary report which is submitted to the RQAEG

2.72   As noted in section A3.3, the main vehicle to allow the Board of Studies annual oversight of standards is receipt of external examiner reports, which explicitly request comments on standards. Additionally external examiners are required to comment on aspects of the student experience such as the timelines and quality of feedback on assessed work.

2.73   Module reports are prepopulated with course data and require a commentary on this together with commentaries on learning, teaching and assessment strategies, resources and student feedback. The team noted that the format of the report allows for critical reflection and that it results in an action plan which is reviewed the following year. The format is new and alignment of module reviews with those of the University along with their receipt by the Board of Study was noted by the Head of Centre as an enhancement to ensure quality

2.74   Course reports provide opportunity for annual reflection on the quality of programmes as a whole and again result in an action plan.

2.75   The annual summary report submitted to RQAEG is simply a data compilation and, although RQAEG and Study Group see Board of Studies minutes as well, the review team considers that Study Group will have better oversight once its own annual monitoring process is fully in place.

2.76   Internal Subject Review is a partner university process 'to periodically review all fields in a subject area as a means of assuring itself that the academic standards of its awards are being appropriately met and that the quality of the student experience for those studying for its awards is appropriate'. The review includes a panel with a member external to both the University and KULISC, and includes a reaffirmation of curriculum content and consideration of standards and the quality of the student experience. KULISC was subject to this process in 2015 with no major issues raised concerning standards or quality.

2.77   Centre Review was introduced by Study Group to provide an overview of each centre's operations. In the initial round, all centres were reviewed, further reviews will be scheduled according to a risk-based assessment. The review includes consideration of academic standards. KULISC had its Centre Review in 2015; recommendations concerning standards included the need to submit annual monitoring information in a timely way and to urgently appoint a new external examiner for one subject area. Each of these recommendations have been complied with as were a number of recommendations related to the student experience.

2.78   The annual and periodic review processes demonstrate that the Expectation is met and that the associated level of risk is low, although the team notes that Study Group will have better oversight once its own annual monitoring process is fully in place.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*

Findings

2.79   Academic appeals and complaints are governed by the policies and procedures of Kingston University. The Student Handbook provides students with information about policies and procedures for making a complaint and lodging an academic appeal. Students are also provided with a copy of the handbook on the Centre's VLE. Both the complaints and academic appeals procedures are available on the University's website and the intranet.

2.80   The policies and procedures would allow Expectation B9 to be met and enable students to make a complaint or appeal that would be fairly heard and responded to.

2.81   The review team examined the policies and procedures of the University as used by KULISC as well as holding meetings with staff and students.

2.82   The University's Student Complaints Procedure provides clear guidance for partner institutions. Stage 1 of the three stage process, which is the informal stage, is dealt with by the Centre in liaison with the University's Academic Liaison Officer and efforts are made to resolve issues raised at this informal level. If the complainant is not satisfied with outcome, the complaint moves to Stage 2 of the procedure in which the student writes a letter to the governing faculty of the University. The faculty Complaint Coordinator deals with the complaint to timescales stated in the procedure. Stage 3 involves a complaint review that does not re-investigate the complaint unless certain criteria are met, for example, procedural irregularities. Meetings with staff and students demonstrated awareness of the formal complaints and appeals procedures. Student issues are addressed and resolved by staff at the centre through informal means and students report satisfaction with the responsiveness of staff at the Centre to issues that they raise.

2.83   An academic appeal is defined as a request for a review of a decision of an Assessment Board responsible for decisions concerned with student progress, assessment and awards. The relevant faculty of the University deals with academic appeals according to a two-stage procedure and timescale, as detailed in the academic appeals for taught courses procedure. Academic appeals are only considered if one or more of the criteria specified in the procedure are deemed to have been met, which may include mitigating circumstances that the Assessment Board was not aware of at the time of its meeting and decision-making. Mitigating circumstances are dealt with appropriately.

2.84   Overall, there are effective policies and procedures for handling complaints and appeals. The review team therefore concludes that Expectation B9 is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.85   In reaching its judgement about the quality of learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook.

2.86   All nine expectations are met and eight have an associated risk level of low. The remaining Expectation (B4) is assigned a moderate risk level. One recommendation is made relating to this area that identifies a need for KULISC to analyse non-progression data to help inform support mechanisms. An affirmation linked to the use of the new RAG system, that is now being used to monitor student progress, is also identified.

2.87   One area of good practice is recorded that relates to Expectation B7 and the fullness of information that is provided to external examiners.

2.88   The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at KULISC **meets** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The KULISC, Study Group and the University all recognise the importance of producing accurate and complete information appropriate to its intended audience, including stakeholders as well as prospective and current students. The management and production of information is guided and governed by policies and requirements of both Study Group and University. The website is jointly managed by KULISC and the University's International Office and conforms to both Study Group and University requirements. Information to current students is provided both through the website and the student VLE.

3.2 The policies of Study Group, University and KULISC for the information published on the website, and for the publication of information for internal and external stakeholders allows the Expectation to be met.

3.3 The review team tested this by scrutinising information published on the website and the VLE, and examining key documents such as the Student Handbook, Staff Handbook, Centre Handbook and other publications.

3.4 Study Group requires its Centres to produce and annually update a number of key documents. The documents required are given in their Provider statement regarding key handbooks and other documents for all Centres from 2015-16 academic year. These include the Centre Handbook, Staff Handbook, Student Handbook, Programme and Module Handbooks and a Calendar of Business for the academic year. KULISC's Head of Centre is responsible for ensuring these documents are produced according to templates set by Study Group and are updated on an annual basis. Templates for these key documents provide the overall structure and the Centre provides content, which means that handbooks may be different across the network. Study Group's Head of Centre Accountabilities Statement states that the Head of Centre is accountable for both ensuring that all documentation is in place and that they are accurate and accessible. Students report that the information they are provided through publications such as the Student Handbook and Programme Handbook are valuable and informative.

3.5 The website is used primarily for marketing purposes. It is the responsibility of the Head of Centre to ensure that the website is accurate, up to date and accessible. The Centre works closely with key areas in the University, for example, the Head of Centre meets the head of the University's International Marketing Office on a three monthly basis. The Steering Group considers and receives information concerning changes and updates to the website. Communications and sign off arrangements between the Centre and the University ensure that the website is fit for purpose, accurate and accessible.

3.6 Programme and module material on the VLE is required to meet minimum standards through issuing staff at the Centre with a document stating the minimum standards. Students find the VLE supportive to their studies and there is a high level of consistency of learning information across the different modules of the programmes of study.

3.7   The Head of KULISC is responsible for ensuring that programme and module handbooks are accurate and up to date, as required by Study Group. Study Group is in the process of developing and introducing a Centre Specification. This will contain key data about each International Study Centre including, for example, programmes being delivered and progression routes for students. This will be controlled by Study Group's Academic Manager and overseen by Study Group's Programme and Validation Committee. The Head of KULISC has responsibility for ensuring information for the Centre Specification is accurate, complete and up to date.

3.8   Kingston University International Study Centre has its own marketing brochure. This is produced centrally by Study Group with the Head of Centre and other staff providing content and ensuring the information is accurate and up to date. The information contained in the marketing brochure is produced through cooperation between the Centre and the University.

3.9   Overall, the Centre in collaboration with the University and following Study group guidelines has in place systems and processes to ensure that information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.10   In reaching its judgement about the quality of the information about learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published Handbook.

3.11   KULISC, working with Study Group and the University, has effective systems in place to ensure that the information it produces is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

3.12   The review team concludes that the quality of information produced by KULISC **meets** UK expectations.

4 Commentary on the enhancement of student learning opportunities

Findings

4.1   KULISC has made a number of deliberate steps to enhance the quality of its provision. In particular, the Head of Centre drew the review team's attention to the use of the RAG status to support student progression, the introduction of more off-site learning experiences and the use of a bespoke video-sharing channel to record talks.

4.2   Enhancements arise from a variety of feedback processes, such as those detailed in section B, and actions to implement them are added to the Centre Action Plan, which is regularly monitored and updated by QAEC.

5   Commentary on the Theme: Student Employability

Findings

5.1   KULISC is in the process of implementing Study Group's employability development theme, called CareerAhead. Study Group's approach to student employability is to embed employment-relevant skills into programmes of study. Key skills such as team work, presentations and debating are built into the preparatory programmes offered at International Study Centres. Research conducted by Study Group involving desk research and feedback from students, College Heads and university partners identified a key area of assisting students on their journey to employability. Feedback from universities, for example, informed Study Group that students at International Study Centres do not engage or fully use the employability and careers service resources offered by their host university. This led Study Group to develop a strategic initiative called CareerAhead. This initiative aims to enhance the employability of its students by supporting them to have a career direction of travel, an understanding of how graduate recruiters assess applicants for jobs, develop a CV and personal statement and develop a personal career plan.

5.2   The CareerAhead initiative will take place with students before arrival at the Centre, on arrival, during study and post-progression to study at the university. Staff at all levels in the Centre are aware of the CareerAhead scheme and that it is planned to be implemented from September 2016 onwards across all programmes offered by the Centre.

5.3   The Centre's Action Plan identifies improving employability information to students as an action concerned with its relationship with the University. The action involves creating an additional section to programme specifications to provide employability information. The Centre has undertaken initiatives related to employability such as the opportunity to gain Microsoft Certification, a visit to the Mini factory in Oxford and a visit for English students to the BBC. Some business modules will contain a significant work placement component in the 2016-17 academic year.

5.4   Students on the International Year One programme will be participating in the University's Business Readiness Programme and the Centre will be working closely with the University on this initiative.

5.5   The Centre offers much of value to students in terms of employability skills. This includes English and study skills, and discussion about employment in one-to one tutorials. The tailored implementation by the Centre of Study Groups' strategic CareerAhead initiative will further improve student employability.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 24-27 of the
Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) handbook

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx

Academic standards
The standards set by **degree-awarding bodies** for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Award
A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

Blended learning
Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

Credit(s)
A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

Degree-awarding body
A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

Distance learning
A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'.
See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award
The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

e-learning
See technology enhanced or enabled learning

Embedded college
Colleges, often operating as part of a network, that are embedded on or near the campuses of two or more UK higher education institutions (HEI) and that primarily provide preparatory programmes for higher education

Enhancement
The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in our review processes.

Expectations
Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning
A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.
See also **distance learning**.

Framework
A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

Framework for higher education qualifications
A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FHEQIS).

Good practice
A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

Learning opportunities
The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcomes
What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

Operational definition
A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

Programme (of study)
An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Programme specifications
Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

Public information
Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

Quality Code
Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of
reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the
higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the **Expectations** that all
providers are required to meet.

Reference points
Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can
be measured.

Subject Benchmark Statement
A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are
expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to
bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence
and identity.

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or **e-learning**)
Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard
The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be
eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national
frameworks and **subject benchmark statements**.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)
An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user
interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such
resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and
forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

Widening participation
Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.