

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

Annex 5: Lancaster 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 Lancaster University International Study Centre (LUISC) has made commendable progress in implementing the action plan from the May 2012 [Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 Apart from the recent appointment of an e-Learning Champion (paragraph 5), there have been no substantial changes at LUISC since the QAA review in 2012. An increase in the range of progression routes to the University is currently being considered.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 LUISC's comprehensive action plan demonstrated a robust and effective response to the features of good practice and the recommendations in the 2012 QAA review report. Staff with whom the review team met had actively engaged in the implementation of the action plan.

4 LUISC has reviewed the use of the term 'credit' in connection with its foundation year. The external examiner contributed to this review, as a result of which all references to 'credit' were removed from programme specifications, student and centre handbooks and student transcripts. Staff confirmed the successful implementation of these changes.

5 An e-Learning Champion has recently been appointed to lead on and further develop the e-learning activity at LUISC that was previously identified as an area of good practice. This Champion will lead on the development of the ISC's e-Learning Strategy. Staff have already benefited from in-house training in this area; they currently plan to pilot e-marking and extend the range of uses made of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to support learning and teaching developments. These developments are being aligned with the University's approach to the use of technology-enhanced learning with the intention of facilitating a smooth transition for students to University studies.

6 The level of academic and pastoral support provided to students, which was previously recognised as an area of good practice, continues to be strengthened. Action since the last QAA review visit includes a revised attendance policy which has resulted in improved student attendance and is being adopted in other ISCs.

7 In response to a recommendation in the QAA 2012 review report, LUISC has produced revised Assessment Regulations which have been approved by Lancaster University. Student handbooks have been updated accordingly. Staff and students confirmed

the usefulness of their respective handbooks and their understanding of assessment arrangements. A Form of Variation has been added to the inter-institutional agreement, stating which institution is responsible for academic standards of programmes. A glossary of academic standards-related terms in use at LUISC has also been revised to reflect the new policy and ensure common understanding and consistent use of terminology.

8 Students who met with the monitoring team were aware of the role of external examiners but did not see their reports. LUISC and the University are currently discussing the possibility of sharing external examiner reports with students through the VLE.

9 Processes for the management of information have been reviewed and revised. The monitoring team found evidence that these processes are used effectively. Students confirmed that information given to them was generally full and accurate, but they would value more information about progression opportunities available to them across all the University's provision.

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

10 LUISC's revised Assessment Regulations (paragraph 7) were produced with reference to relevant sections of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). The Head of Centre is a member of the provider's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) and has participated in that Committee's work to align BES academic policy and procedures with the Quality Code. Staff at LUISC had made particular use of *Chapter B3: Learning and teaching* of the Quality Code and accessed the QAA website to keep up to date with quality assurance and enhancement matters.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

11 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.

12 The monitoring visit was carried out by Alan Hunt, QAA Officer, and Professor Gwendolen Bradshaw, Reviewer, on 6 June 2013.