

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

Annex 9: Royal Holloway, University London 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 Royal Holloway, University London International Study Centre (RHULISC) is making commendable progress following the May 2012 [Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 There have been no significant changes since the last QAA review in 2012.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The 2012 review report annex for RHULISC did not identify any specific features of good practice, or make any recommendations. However, RHULISC has been active in considering and acting upon the good practice and recommendations identified for the provider. Additional mechanisms for academic and pastoral support include the introduction of weekly advisory meetings with the Academic Subjects Coordinator, open support sessions for each discipline, and a 'welcome weekend' with previous students acting as 'buddies'. Students expressed satisfaction with these innovations and were generally very positive about the staff and the provision.

4 There has also been an extension of staff development activities, with staff actively encouraged to take part in both the programmes of the University and the provider. There is also an internal ISC staff development week prior to the beginning of the autumn term. The provision of staff development is linked to the staff appraisal system. RHULISC has also been instrumental in developing a local network of connections with two other ISCs, which has been important for developing peer observation of teaching and sharing good practice. The Head of Centre has set up regular weekly meetings with staff in the University to discuss any emerging issues, and then reports the outcomes to his management team.

5 RHULISC has responded to all the overall provider recommendations. The contract has been amended to confirm that RHUL is responsible for academic standards. A glossary of academic terms has been produced and given to all staff teaching on the programmes. Assessment regulations are made available to students in the student handbook, and are also in the centre handbook for staff. There has been a change to the University's requirements in relation to retakes.

6 Students must achieve defined progression grades in order to continue onto their chosen programme in the University. The requirements are clearly stated and the students are aware of them. Students who do not meet them at first sitting can resit up to two modules. However, the timeframe for entry into the next academic year is tight, and the

levels of support available to students are less than that available during the rest of the year, especially for those who are unsuccessful.

7 Bellerbys Educational Services standard procedures for checking and confirming the accuracy of information provided for sign-off by the University were working effectively. Students confirmed that information given to them was full and accurate.

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

8 The UK Quality Code for Higher Education has been used by RHULISC as its principal external reference point, mainly through the ISC's strong links with the University and its use of University policies and procedures.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

9 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.

10 The monitoring visit was carried out by Alan Hunt, QAA Officer, and Professor Alan Jago, Reviewer, on 25 June 2013.