



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

## Annex 6: University of Leicester 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 University of Leicester International Study Centre (ULISC) is making acceptable progress following the May 2012 [Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight](#).

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

2 Total student numbers have contracted from 250 in 2012 to 213 in 2013. There have been no changes to the provision since 2012, but ULISC is consulting with the University about the development of a pre-master's programme.

### Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 While there were no features of good practice relating specifically to ULISC in the 2012 review report, three areas of good practice were identified across the network of ISCs, and the monitoring team found that these are still strongly in evidence at ULISC. There is also evidence of a strong commitment to enhancement. Good practice is disseminated through staff meetings and module review days, and staff gave illustrative examples. ULISC has further enhanced its support for students since 2012; for example, through the appointment of an Under-18 Personal Advisor, and the introduction of 'progression support and target meetings' for under-performing students leading to individual action plans and support programmes. Students expressed satisfaction with induction arrangements, but ULISC is undertaking an enhancement review. Students use the University's virtual learning environment and find it helpful, but ULISC is seeking to enhance this by promoting consistency of content and presentation between modules. Students also found assessment feedback very helpful; marked assignments are normally returned within a week, but ULISC sets no formal timescale and recognises that it may be necessary to formalise this.

4 The quality of staff development is a strength: staff attend conferences and cascade their learning to colleagues. Examples of networking include support staff engaging in teleconferencing and training activities. Staff are able to participate in the University's staff development programme. Informal arrangements for peer observation of teaching are being encouraged with a view to disseminating this as good practice across the ISC network.

5 Responding to the 2012 report's recommendations to Bellerbys Educational Services (BES), ULISC has signed a Variation of Agreement with the University confirming responsibility for academic standards, and has introduced a ULISC Glossary of Academic Terms. External examiners are in place for all programmes, but they do not see and approve assessment instruments in advance. Students do not routinely see external examiner reports, but are aware that they could ask to see them. Assessment regulations are set out in the Student Handbook; while these are generally clear, students did not understand the

mark penalty for late submission without mitigating circumstances. Students also believed, incorrectly, that deadlines were treated flexibly depending on the reasons for lateness.

6 Requirements for progression to the University are clearly stated in the Student Handbook and students are aware of these requirements. Students who obtain only a pass grade cannot normally continue to the University. Students were not aware what would happen to students in this category, though they were aware that those who entered in September (though not those entering in January) could retake a term. ULISC is studying patterns of student performance, at ULISC and after their progression to the University, and has made changes where necessary; for example, the entry requirements for modern languages has been raised.

7 The BES's standard procedures for checking information prior to sign-off by the University are working effectively. Students confirmed that information given to them is full and accurate.

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

8 The Head of Centre briefs staff about the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). The review team learned that the Quality Code would inform preparation for the University's re-approval of the ISC in 2014.

#### **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 Brian Anderton, Reviewer, on 5 June 2013.