

## Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (Study Group UK), May 2014

### Annex 7: University of Lincoln 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 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (BES) University of Lincoln International Study Centre (ULISC) has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the June 2013 [monitoring visit](#).

#### Section 2: Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 ULISC has approved a new suite of English and Skills for University Study (ESUS) modules, an expanded International Year 1 (IY1) Programme Document and amendments to IY1 Business and Management modules. The University of Lincoln (the University) has endorsed these changes. The journalism and engineering IY1 programmes, which were validated by the University, have been withdrawn. ULISC's office and classrooms are now based in the same building in the residential part of the University campus. There were 285 students at ULISC in 2013-14.

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

3 Good practice has been progressed further. Eleven staff members attended the Teachers' Conference in November 2013, and staff offered examples of good practice disseminated to colleagues. Systems for the effective use of external examiners and their reports still operate. External examiner reports and responses are available to students on the virtual learning environment (VLE). ULISC continues to have appropriate staffing levels. Staff teaching English participate in BES networking, developing assessments and sharing teaching materials with staff in the other International Study Centres.

4 ULISC has developed a more proactive approach to academic and pastoral support for students by incorporating one-to-one sessions into the tutorial programme. Students said that they receive all the academic support they need. An induction checklist encourages student engagement with induction, and students find this helpful. Any induction activities which may have been missed are identified and discussed in the weekly tutorials. Baseline requirements for VLE content are being met. Peer observation of teaching has been introduced and is being developed. The student voice is heard through student representation and student evaluation, and appropriate responses are made.

5 Students said that assessment requirements are published on the VLE. ULISC has produced documents to assist teachers with the approval of assessment tasks, and there is evidence that they are used effectively.

6 ULISC has introduced measures to improve the quality of feedback to students. However, some students said that feedback is variable in quality and sometimes not provided at all unless actively sought from tutors. Some students experienced difficulty in contacting staff to obtain feedback.

7 Assessment schedules are produced for each programme and are accessible to staff and students on the VLE. Any changes must be approved by the Head of Centre, who takes an overview of assessment loading. However, students said that sometimes a number of assignment deadlines are scheduled together. Although staff provide time-management advice and guidance, some students find the assessment load difficult to manage.

8 Academic Rules and Regulations are accessible to students in the student handbook, and students said that they understand them. The use of different terminology, in the relevant handbook sections, to describe (apparently) identical assessment outcomes ('successful results'; 'successfully completing the pathway'; meeting 'the required minimum'; meeting the 'standard progression grade'; and the 'pass grade') is potentially confusing.

9 The Academic Rules and Regulations in the student handbook and the Assessment Regulations in the IY1 programme document have some content in common, and staff referred to the former as 'the Assessment Regulations'. While the information provided is not inconsistent, the use of two differently constituted sets of regulations is potentially confusing.

10 Staff said that the English language competence requirement for progression to Year 2 was raised in September 2013, to reflect mapping to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Requirements for other modules were unchanged. Offer letters referred students to accurate website information. Progression requirements are set out in the student handbook and on the VLE. However, some students are unclear as to the progression requirements with respect to subject-based modules.

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

11 The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and subject benchmark statements were used in the development of the IY1, leading to approval of module changes under the BES approval process in September 2013. Learning outcomes for the English language modules were developed in line with the relevant Common European Framework of Reference for Languages descriptors.

12 ULISC operations have been mapped to all relevant sections of the Quality Code, a process which has involved subject heads and teaching teams. Further work to progress actions arising from this exercise is being led by the Head of Centre and the Heads of Business, English, and Academic Subjects.

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

13 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous monitoring visit. 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 full review.

14 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Alan Hunt (QAA Officer) and Dr Sylvia Hargreaves (Reviewer) on 28 May 2014.

**QAA920c - R3992 - Aug 14**

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2014  
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000  
Email [enquiries@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@qaa.ac.uk)  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786