



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Global Banking School Ltd, December 2015

Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that Global Banking School Ltd (the School) has made commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [previous monitoring visit](#) in December 2014.

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 At the time of the visit, 127 students were enrolled at the School on full-time courses leading to qualifications at levels 5 to 7 on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. Of these, 66 were studying for ATHE Ltd awards; 54 for Chartered Financial Analyst Institute (CFA) awards; and seven for Pearson awards (who have the option to leave with an exit award at level 4). Given the increase in total student numbers of more than 50 students since 2014, the School was subject to an extended monitoring visit.

3 The new campus in Canary Wharf is fully operational, although most of the teaching for full-time students continues to take place at the original campus in Bow. The School continues to investigate the possibility of offering undergraduate and postgraduate degrees validated by a UK university.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The School has made commendable progress in implementing the action plan developed as a result of the Review for Educational Oversight in 2012. It was able to demonstrate during the monitoring visit that it is addressing all of the items in the action plan and has effective internal processes for monitoring and enhancing the quality of its programmes, for example by further enhancement of its annual Quality Assurance Report, and by regularly reviewing and updating policies. Peer observation is used as an effective tool of professional development.

5 Students are very satisfied with their learning environment, the quality of teaching, and the accessibility and responsiveness of the School and staff to their individual needs. Formative feedback, in timetabled sessions and informally, continues to be a strength. Students confirm its value and their opportunity to contribute to the development of the new feedback sheets. Feedback is given at a level that maintains an appropriate balance between support for learning and academic challenge.

6 Students benefit from substantial career guidance and support from staff with industry experience. The 60-hour Career Shop programme at the Canary Wharf site and help with building CVs add significant value to the academic programmes. The annual Valuation Olympiad and the Higher National Diploma (HND)/ATHE/CFA debate present additional and exciting challenges for students and help raise aspirations.

7 The annual Quality Assurance Report and associated action plan are thorough, detailed and comprehensive but there is further scope for evaluating the outcomes of

action planning, for example by taking participant feedback at development workshops. The system for reviewing policies, procedures and web-based information has been fully implemented, and students contribute to the review process through their representation on Programme Committees.

8 The system of peer observation is well established. Key points are considered in Programme Committee meetings and by the Academic Board. All teaching staff are observed, and observation reports inform appraisal processes for full-time staff, the development of individual action plans, and the dissemination of good practice through staff developmental workshops. Staff confirm the value of the process and students confirm that they have seen it taking place. Staff are encouraged to engage in continuing professional development (CPD). Systematic evaluation of all recorded CPD activity would help the School to further develop its human resource strategy.

9 The virtual learning environment (VLE) continues to provide students with ready access to School and programme information. Assignments are submitted through VLE-linked plagiarism-detection software.

10 The School has made impressive progress in devising mechanisms to support students' understanding of policies and regulations, and in involving them in the review process. Student representatives attend the meetings of Programme Committees as full members and meet their peers in Student Committee meetings. The School has put on training workshops for the representatives, including familiarisation with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). The student handbooks, which include relevant policies, are currently being revised in consultation with students.

11 The School has responded to the points raised in the last annual monitoring report by clarifying its quality management structure and setting out clear terms of reference for each committee, including the Academic Board.

12 Engagement of students in quality assurance and enhancement is good. The revised quality management structure includes student representation on the Academic Board and on Programme Committees, and minutes of meetings show a high level of involvement by students and responsiveness by the School. Opportunities for formal student feedback are built into the curriculum, with CFA students feeding back once a term, and ATHE and HND students every fifth day of each module, through the VLE. The School has made excellent arrangements for the training of representatives and has demonstrated a commitment to their involvement in the management of the institution.

13 The School Assessment Policy is well understood by staff and students. The School uses awarding body templates for HND assignment setting and assessment. ATHE students are given assignments devised by the awarding organisation and CFA students are assessed by external examination. Tutors give formative feedback when the student has drafted at least half the assignment. This is supportive and allows early identification of malpractice. The Internal Verification Policy takes account of awarding organisation requirements, and the practice of verifying new teachers' assessment packs prior to their formal engagement acts as an additional check on the quality of assessment. Where there is a difference of opinion between the assessor and internal verifier, the latter refers the assignment to a second marker. Students are very positive about the arrangements for assessment. The most recent external verification report from ATHE Ltd in November 2015 concluded that 'assessors are assessing accurately against national standards and documenting assessment correctly'. Action points identified in the report are being addressed by the School through staff development and standardisation meetings.

14 The School has in place a robust admissions procedure underpinned by an admissions policy. Approximately 13 per cent of applications are accepted. All students have

to provide a statement of purpose and are interviewed, where necessary via internet video, as part of the admissions process. Students reported that they had felt well supported through the process, and that the School took full account of academic qualifications. Students whose first language is not English are expected to produce acceptable evidence of proficiency at CEFR (the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) B2 level, and the interview and statement of purpose provides an additional check on this.

15 The School keeps careful records of students' progression, retention and achievement. Overall levels of achievement are not precisely known, as one of the School's major awarding organisations does not disclose examination results, but on other programmes either all students pass, or the great majority do. Twenty-nine students discontinued their studies during 2015. Within this number the largest group was made up of 12 students who had received job offers in the UK or abroad.

Section 4: Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education

16 The School provided evidence that it is fully aware of the Quality Code. A revised version of the School's Quality Assurance Manual was produced in November 2015. This provides a clear and comprehensive guide to the School's quality procedures and makes explicit reference to the Quality Code throughout. Regular workshops are held to prepare staff for the Higher Education Review that is scheduled to be held in 2016. The School introduces its students to the principles of quality assurance through regular workshops, and the quality of the student submission to this report is evidence of the effectiveness of this.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

17 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 review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

18 The monitoring visit was carried out by Dr David Taylor, Coordinator, and Ms Jenny Steer, Reviewer, on 2 to 3 December 2015.

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