

Review for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Leo Baeck College, October 2013

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 Leo Baeck College (the College) is making commendable progress with implementing the action plan from the October 2012 [Review for Educational Oversight](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 The provision of academic programmes is unaltered from that at the time of the 2012 review visit. The number of higher education students has increased by three to 18. The College is progressively moving recruitment to the six programmes validated by the University of Winchester in 2012. It has plans to introduce additional awards in Jewish Sacred Music. The association with King's College London will cease when the final student cohort graduates at the end of 2013-14. The College has established a new part-time post of Head of Vocational Studies.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The College has successfully built on four of the five good practice points identified in the 2012 review report and has fully implemented all of the report's recommendations. Overall, there is clear evidence of improvements to the management of higher education, although a few actions are recent and have yet to have a significant impact on the students' learning experience. The information the College produces about the learning opportunities it offers is accurate and trustworthy.

4 In building on the areas of good practice, the College has continued to make effective use of external specialist advisers to develop the curriculum, including proposals for new academic programmes. It has also completed the first stages of mapping its provision against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). Module feedback arrangements have been further strengthened and new programme-level feedback procedures introduced for 2013-14. The College has enhanced the already comprehensive arrangements for student support by establishing a resource bank for special learning needs and trialling a learner profiling system for student admissions. It has also introduced rabbinic mentors, whose vocational support for students will continue for two years after leaving the College. The Publicity, Marketing and Publications Committee has continued its active oversight of information about learning opportunities, notably in the development of new corporate materials. The introduction of a formal policy statement to underpin the use of external stakeholders in programme delivery has been postponed. The policy statement will now be produced early in 2014 when the involvement of two key sponsors and stakeholders, Liberal Judaism and the Movement for Reform Judaism, has been formally agreed. The action plan should be adjusted to reflect the new timescale.

5 Actions on all of the four recommendations have been implemented in line with the action plan, although not all to the original timetable. In respect of the one advisable recommendation, a comprehensive strategy has been implemented for all electronic

communication. The desirable recommendation to rationalise quality assurance arrangements is ongoing, with the University of Winchester procedures being embedded across the provision. The College has strengthened links between peer observation, appraisal and staff development through a new policy document and a revised appraisal form. The arrangements for work-based and placement learning have been brought together as a discrete section of the 2013-14 handbook for rabbinic students, although this action has been completed some months behind schedule.

6 There is a high level of student engagement through a variety of formal and informal mechanisms. Students regularly contribute to academic developments within the College, as is evident from their involvement with some areas of the action plan. For example, students were actively involved in a review of module feedback and enthusiastically endorsed the revised forms and arrangements. Representatives attend a range of College meetings, while an active Student Society has direct and regular communication with the Principal. Students are treated by staff as equal partners and confirm that this facilitates mature interaction and easy communication.

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

7 The College has begun the process of mapping its provision against the Expectations and Indicators of Part B: 'Assuring and enhancing academic quality' of the Quality Code, building on its previous work with the Academic Infrastructure. The College continues to make regular and highly effective use of a range of additional external reference points to underpin academic standards and the learning experience of students. It has worked closely with external experts and Jewish community leaders on a number of recent initiatives. These include the development of proposals for new academic programmes in Jewish Sacred Music, a strategy for recruitment to Jewish Education programmes and the introduction of carefully considered arrangements for students with learning difficulties.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

8 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.

9 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr David Lewis (Coordinator) and Dr Tommie Anderson-Jaquet (Reviewer) on 8 October 2013.