



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of The London College, UCK Ltd, April 2017

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 The London College, UCK Ltd (the College) has made commendable progress with implementing the action plan from the April 2016 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 There are currently 964 students registered on programmes at the College. Of these, 203 students are enrolled on seven top-up degree programmes validated by the University of Derby (the University). The remainder of the students are registered on Pearson HNC and HND courses.

3 In July 2016, the College was validated by the University to run three-year degree programmes commencing in September 2017. These will be in the subject areas already delivered in the top-up programmes. Since the review the College has been preparing for the introduction of these programmes by aligning its processes and procedures with those of the University. It has invested in new equipment for the engineering programmes and made further improvement to library resources. Staffing has remained stable and approximately 80 per cent of staff are full time.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The College is making commendable progress in response to the recommendations of the review. The academic appeals procedures for the Higher National programmes have been reviewed and appropriately implemented. The terms of reference of the College's committees have been reviewed and good progress has been made with developing student involvement and representation on College committees. There is now a formal structure for assessment boards for the Higher National programmes. The College has improved the arrangements for students undertaking work experience placements on the Higher National Health and Social Care programmes by enhancing the position of the placement coordinator and employing a full-time person in this role. The College continues to ensure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place for the admission of students. The revised terms of reference and governance structure ensures that monitoring of internal courses and reviews is undertaken appropriately. Further integration of the University's processes is being effected.

5 Since the review the College has implemented a clearer policy and procedure for academic appeals on its Higher National programmes. This policy and procedure mirror the University's and details are on the College website. Students confirmed they were aware of the procedure. Staff confirmed that there have not yet been any formal appeals. Students reported they were aware that issues had on occasion been raised informally with members of staff, as set out in the procedure, and concerns had been resolved.

6 As recommended by the review, the College has revised the terms of reference for the governance structure. Although committees have a more formalised membership and are chaired by designated staff, there is still some inconsistency across the terms of reference. Those for the Quality and Standards committee clearly set out reporting and responsibilities while those of the Assessment Board are brief and do not, for example, refer to any responsibility for regular review of data on progression and achievement with a view to further enabling the College to meet its responsibilities for maintaining academic standards.

7 The College has made good progress in developing student representation and attendance at relevant committees. A student council meets at least once a semester where, through the student representatives, student issues are discussed. From these discussions and the module evaluation questionnaires a poster is displayed in College to inform students of changes made as a result of their feedback. The College has appointed a 'student voice' coordinator who liaises with the student support office and course leaders to resolve any issues. She also works closely with a University Student Union representative: for instance, together they ran a training session for student representatives, and students reported that this training had been useful. Students confirmed that both academic and pastoral support at the College is good and that staff are approachable and helpful. They consider that, overall, their voice is heard and acted upon. The College participates in the National Student Survey in order to provide an additional means of gaining students' views about their provision.

8 As recommended at the review, the College has implemented a formal structure for the assessment boards of the Pearson programmes in parallel to those for the top-up degrees. Internal moderation structures have been strengthened and internal verification takes place before results are finalised at the boards. External examiners confirm that standards are maintained. It is made clear to students that results are provisional until confirmed by the external examiner. Feedback on assessments is now aligned against marking criteria instead of learning outcomes.

9 The College has improved the arrangements for students undertaking work experience placements on the Higher National Health and Social Care programmes. The role of the Placement Coordinator is now more focused to ensure, as recommended by the review, that all necessary documentation is in place for the College, students and placement provider. Students on the Higher National Health and Social Care programmes are usually working in the sector and can arrange their own placement. The Coordinator liaises with employers to ensure that the College can support the project and that a mentor at the place of employment is in place who is fully apprised of the course requirements. A full-time placement tutor has been appointed and is currently shadowing the present academic tutor.

10 The College continues to ensure that there are appropriate policies and procedures in place for the admission of students. Students confirmed that they were interviewed, and that their qualifications and proficiency in English were checked. Formal certification of Recognised Prior Learning is confirmed with the appropriate awarding body or organisation. In preparation for the change in focus to the degree awards, all information on the website is currently being updated and approved by the University. The new website is scheduled to go live in May 2017.

11 The revised terms of reference and governance structure are adequate to ensure that monitoring of internal courses and reviews is undertaken appropriately. Individual course reports now go to the Quality and Standards Committee and from there a combined report is referred to Academic Board. The College has an Annual Monitoring and Enhancement Plan. The Pearson Annual Review is positive and the College has

incorporated the monitoring processes of the University into its own processes, intending to progress these in the future partnership when delivering the new degree programmes.

12 Student recruitment has been maintained for the academic year 2016-17 and senior management confirmed that applications for 2017-18 are being sustained. The University has approved the transfer of students currently on the first year of the Higher National programmes to the second year of the degree programme in September 2017. The College does not currently produce a detailed analysis of cohort progression, but annual monitoring reports for the top-up degrees indicate high achievement by learners. For example, in the academic year 2015-2016 two students on the BA Electrical and Electronic Engineering obtained first class honours, 10 students obtained upper second class, seven students obtained lower second class and three students obtained third class awards. Retention statistics produced for this visit indicate that retention is generally above 80 per cent across the provision. This is confirmed in the monitoring reports for the HND programmes, where it is noted that the retention and achievement rate for full-time learners is approximately 80 per cent for Electrical Engineering and 85 per cent for Health and Social Care.

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

13 The College continues to use external reference points to enhance the quality of its Higher Education provision. Staff respond proactively to the comments and recommendations made by the University external examiners and Pearson moderators. The University validation made use of the *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and Subject Benchmark Statements. The College is aware of, and has already engaged with the potential offered by, the Teaching Excellence Framework. The College supports and encourages staff to work within the framework of The Higher Education Academy (HEA). The Principal is a senior Fellow of the Academy and staff who are not already Fellows are being encouraged to apply.

14 The College has been working towards recognition and accreditation of its degree programmes by The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and the Joint Board of Moderators (JBM). Formal accreditation events have recently been undertaken.

5 Background to the monitoring visit

15 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.

16 The monitoring visit was carried out by Sue Miller, Reviewer, and Brenda Hodgkinson, Coordinator, on 26 April 2017.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557050
Web: www.qaa.ac.uk