# Review of UK transnational education in Greece: Cardiff Metropolitan University and Perrotis College

November 2015

## Executive summary

Cardiff Metropolitan University (the University) describes itself as a global university, attracting one tenth of its Cardiff-based students from overseas. Its range of programmes and subjects identifies it as focused upon professionally and vocationally relevant higher education and on predominantly applied research. The University's approach to local and international collaboration is based on fostering a small number of durable, robust and high-quality partnerships that are underpinned by a strong risk-management framework and secure business plans.

Perrotis College (PC) was founded in 1995 to offer post-secondary programmes for careers in the food and agricultural industries. Located in Thessaloniki, PC provides degree programmes that are both research-based and practically oriented. The College recruits students from Greece and the Balkans, as well as from other European countries and the USA. Internships and work experience, undertaken at the College's on-site farm and food processing facilities and/or externally in the food and agriculture sectors, enable students to learn by doing. The College provides financial support to those who might otherwise lack the means to pursue post-secondary education.

The collaboration between PC and the University commenced in 2006 with the validation of two degrees through Cardiff School of Management. A franchised programme was added to the provision in June 2011 through Cardiff School of Health Sciences. Current student numbers total 144. Discussions and programme development are currently ongoing with respect to the validation of a new undergraduate tourism programme, in partnership with the University.

In approving the partnership and the programmes, the University carried out appropriate legal and financial checks, and applied its processes to confirm alignment of the College's vision, mission and strategy with its own and to satisfy itself that the College had robust quality assurance processes and adequate operational structures to support learning delivery. The University continues to maintain effective institutional and School-level oversight of the provision. A number of positive features were identified by the review: the extensive support in teaching, learning and assessment provided by the University, the extent and effectiveness of student engagement, the University Students' Union's engagement with PC students, and the University's Student's Guide to Studying on a Cardiff Metropolitan University Programme at a Partner Institution.

# Introduction

1        Cardiff Metropolitan University (the University) has a student population of approximately 17,000 students distributed across five Academic Schools and 19 collaborative partners. The University's range of programmes identifies it as focused upon professionally and vocationally relevant higher education, and on predominantly applied research.

2        The University's Mission, as identified in the Strategic Plan (2013-2017), includes the provision of student-centred learning opportunities and a culture within which applied research and enterprise will flourish; development of established and new centres of excellence in professional education; applied research and knowledge transfer; and provision of services meeting the needs of Wales and wider communities by working in partnership with city, national and international bodies.

3        University strategy relating to collaborative arrangements is articulated in the Strategic Plan. The University's approach to local and international collaboration is based on fostering a small number of durable, robust and high-quality partnerships that are underpinned by a strong risk-management framework and secure business plans. The University currently has 19 collaborative partners, 14 of these within its transnational education (TNE) portfolio, with approximately 6,000 students studying on programmes that fall within the University's definition of collaborative provision. Of these partners, three are Wales-based further education colleges and one is a private training provider, with the remainder based in London and overseas. The University describes the growth of its collaborative provision over the past seven years as planned and controlled, particularly within TNE, in accordance with the strategic intention articulated within the Strategic Plan and Internationalisation Strategy.

4        The University defines its collaborative provision activity as falling within one of the following models: franchised programme (initially developed and validated for delivery at the University and subsequently delivered at a partner institution); validated programme (developed by the collaborating institution and approved by the University to be delivered at that institution); and outreach franchise (a programme developed and validated at the University and delivered at an institution other than the University, by staff of the University or by a combination of University and partner staff).

5        The University underwent a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) hybrid review in May 2014, during which a QAA Panel visited the University and considered a sample of its collaborative partners, including City Unity College, Athens. QAA judged that academic standards, the quality of student learning opportunities, the quality of information about learning opportunities and the enhancement of student learning opportunities all meet UK expectations. One of the review recommendations, that concerning student complaints processes, is relevant to the present TNE review. The University has taken steps to address this recommendation (see paragraph 58).

6        Perrotis College (PC) was founded in 1995 to offer post-secondary programmes for careers in the food and agricultural industries. It holds a licence for the delivery of post-secondary education and training from the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, to which it makes annual returns of staff and student numbers. The College started its operation as part of the American Farm School (AFS), an independent non-profit educational institution incorporated in the State of New York and founded in 1904. Since 2010, PC has operated as an independent institution which, under Greek law, has its own Board and General Assembly, but which remains under the AFS umbrella in terms of governance, financial support and infrastructure. Financially, PC is an affiliate of AFS and its President and CEO is also the President of AFS.

7        Located in Thessaloniki, PC provides degree programmes, in collaboration with the University, that are both research-based and practically oriented, and which respond to public social, economic and environmental concerns. The College is an international community of students and staff, recruiting students from Greece and the Balkans, as well as from other European countries and the USA. Internships and work experience, undertaken at the College's on-site farm and food processing facilities and/or externally in the food and agriculture sectors, enable students to learn by doing.

8        The collaboration between PC and the University commenced in 2006, with the validation of two degrees through Cardiff School of Management (CSM): BSc International Agribusiness and BSc Agro-Environmental Systems Management. The programme titles, though not the content, were subsequently changed for marketing purposes to BSc International Business (in 2012) and BSc Environmental Systems Management (ESM, in 2009), respectively. In June 2011, the BSc Food Science and Technology (FST) programme was franchised through Cardiff School of Health Sciences (CSHS). Current student numbers total 144: BSc ESM (63); BSc FST (45); BSc International Business (36). Discussions and programme development are currently ongoing with respect to the validation of a new undergraduate tourism programme, in partnership with the University.

## Developing, agreeing and managing arrangements for setting up and operating the link

9        The University's Academic Board, chaired by the Vice Chancellor, holds ultimate responsibility for the standards and quality of the University's collaborative provision. The Academic Board delegates quality assurance and quality enhancement functions to its formal subcommittees, the Academic Quality and Standards Board (AQSB) and the Learning and Teaching Board respectively. Their business is informed by Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC) deliberations. The Governor's TNE Committee, a formal subcommittee of the Governing Body, also maintains oversight of collaborative activity. The new Internationalisation Board, piloted during the last academic year and now in full operation, is charged with embedding internationalisation into the curriculum, supported in its work by Associate Deans International (recently created posts) appointed in each School. Institutional executive responsibility for quality assurance aspects of collaborative provision lies with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Director of Student Experience, and processes are managed through the Academic Standards and Quality Unit.

10        The University has comprehensive procedures, set out clearly in the Academic Handbook and Collaborative Provision Handbook, for setting up, approving and managing collaborative partnerships, including thorough due diligence checks and risk assessment. The University will only enter into collaborative arrangements in subject areas within its expertise and where teaching and assessment are in English (or Welsh).

11        In approving the partnership with PC, the University applied its procedures effectively, carrying out appropriate legal and financial checks, confirming alignment of PC's vision, mission and strategy with its own and satisfying itself that the College had in place robust quality assurance processes and adequate operational structures to support learning delivery. In accordance with the University's procedures at that time, a preliminary investigative visit took place in May 2006. The process was informed by a substantial College submission, covering profile, vision and mission; governance and management; financial information and an auditor's report; academic programmes and student data; existing collaborations; resources, facilities and student support; and staffing.

12        The University panel, chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Collaboration and Partnership) and including external membership, met the College's senior managers, staff and a student representative, explored the College's submission in detail and undertook an

extensive tour of facilities. The panel's recommendation that the proposal proceed to a validation event, with two recommendations concerning updates to information technology and revisions to documentation, was subsequently approved by AQSB.

13      The College submission notes that, like all other non-state colleges and universities operating in Greece at that time, it was not recognised by the Greek Ministry of Education, though it collaborated with numerous US and EU universities and several of its longstanding programmes were accredited by EU and Greek official bodies. Currently, the College holds a licence for the delivery of post-secondary education and training from the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, to which it makes annual returns of staff and student numbers.

14      The written agreements between the University and PC comprise programme and financial agreements, to be read and performed in accordance with an overarching collaboration agreement addressing generic matters such as warranties, confidentiality, intellectual property, insurance and a prohibition on serial franchising. The current programme agreement, for a five-year term commencing in 2013-14, details clearly the respective responsibilities of the parties.

15      The University maintains effective institutional oversight of PC provision through various mechanisms. PC risk matrices, updated on a rolling basis, inform the overall risk scorecard as part of the Annual Partnership Review. This process considers not only business matters but also quality assurance, primarily through scrutiny of the Perrotis College Annual Action Plan, which is comprehensive in addressing matters arising from external examiner reports, moderator/link tutor reports and annual programme review reports. An annual overview of external examiner reports by the collaborative partner is considered by CPC and AQSB. The Academic Board receives an annual summary and analysis of external examiner reports for taught programmes, including collaborative provision and an annual analysis of moderator/link tutor reports is presented to AQSB.

16      Due diligence reviews of collaborative partners, conducted every three years and reported to the Vice Chancellor's Board (VCB), Initial Approval Panel (IAP) and Governors' TNE Sub Committee, involve financial checks and scrutiny of in-country approvals, any changes to legal status and relevant legal/political/ethical/cultural matters. A periodic due diligence review of PC, including credit checks and scrutiny of audited accounts, has been completed and reported to the IAP. The VCB and Governors' TNE committee are due to receive the associated reports shortly.

17      Periodic partnership review was introduced by the University in 2012. In the same year, a process described by the University as a combined periodic programme and partnership review and a proportionate response to limited provision was undertaken at PC. While the review panel (including an external member) adopted a largely programme-specific focus in considering submitted documentation and meeting staff and students, it also addressed broader institutional areas: staff development, student support and representation, resources, and the effectiveness of the partnership links. The small number of conditions arising from the review were subsequently signed off as completed by the panel chair, and the report was presented to and approved by AQSB.

18      The University states that the partnership review process has evolved and become more rigorous and focused since 2012, with the separation of partnership and programme review. The process now in place is informed by an extensive documentary evidence base as well as panel meetings with moderators/link tutors, the partners' senior managers, academic and support staff, and students. PC's next partnership review is scheduled for the 2015-16 academic session.

# Quality assurance

## Academic standards

19	Responsibility for oversight and maintenance of academic standards rests with the University, and the University's quality assurance processes apply. Processes for approval, monitoring and review of collaborative provision are rigorous and clearly documented in the Academic Handbook and Collaborative Provision Handbook.

20	As noted in paragraph 8, the collaboration between PC and the University commenced in 2006 with the validation of two degrees through CSM: BSc International Agribusiness and BSc Agro-Environmental Systems Management. The programme titles, though not the content, were subsequently changed for marketing purposes to BSc International Business (in 2012) and BSc Environmental Systems Management (ESM, in 2009), respectively. In June 2011, the BSc Food Science and Technology was franchised through CSHS.

21	The programme specifications are fully completed within the University template, though some errors of detail, concerning professional accreditation and entry qualifications, require attention. The International Business and ESM programme specifications reference the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and the syllabuses combine generic and agriculture-related content. Senior staff explained that although the University's portfolio included agriculture-related programmes at the time the programmes were approved, the validation model was adopted in the light of the College's discipline expertise and design capability, within the Greek context. Currently, the University does not offer programmes related to agriculture, though it has indirect experience of provision in this area through one of its UK further education partners, and has appointed staff and external examiners with appropriate discipline expertise. The University's existing Food Science and Technology programme was seen as a good fit for the Greek and College contexts, and consequently the franchise model was adopted. Discussions and programme development are currently ongoing with respect to the validation of a new undergraduate tourism programme. The review team **recommends** that the University keep under review the sufficiency of its own discipline expertise, to ensure its continuing capacity to monitor the content and delivery of the validated programmes effectively.

22	Programme approval procedures, closely aligned with those for home programmes, reflect the category of programme. For franchised provision, the process assesses the partner's ability to maintain academic standards and to provide learning opportunities comparable to the home provision, as well as to approve any proposed contextualisation. Additionally, for validated programmes, approval addresses the suitability of programme structure, content, breadth and academic level. The PC programme approvals were conducted in line with University requirements, considering: strategic alignment; the student market; the College's marketing, recruitment and admissions processes; staffing and staff development; learning resources; student support; learning and teaching strategies; programme management and content; learning outcomes and assessment; and the College's understanding of University expectations.

23	The 2006 event, held at PC and informed by the inspection of resources undertaken at the earlier preliminary investigative visit, included panel meetings with senior managers and teaching staff. At the 2011 event, held at the University and informed by an advance visit by the moderator designated to review resources and meet senior managers, teaching staff and students, the panel met the School management and programme teams. Appropriate contextualisation of the franchised programme content was agreed at approval. AQSB granted final approval following satisfaction of the approval conditions.

24      The associated University School, via its moderator/link tutor, is responsible for ensuring that partners maintain standards and quality and that issues raised in their reports, in annual programme review reports, and by external examiners are actioned appropriately. Twice-yearly partner visits, reported within the University template, include meeting staff and students and reviewing student work to confirm adherence to University quality requirements. Recent PC visit reports, responses and associated action planning confirm that the moderator/link tutor system works effectively to support the ongoing monitoring and development of the provision. Students described meetings with the moderator/link tutor, which give them the opportunity to raise any concerns and to discuss their experience more generally. Visits are conducted in line with University requirements, and resulting enhancements have included the provision of additional tutorials and workshops in science subjects; staff time allocation for student support and communication; the provision of extended ethics training in the dissertation module; and ongoing work on ensuring balanced weekly timetabling.

25      The strong working relationship between the University and PC, which has been commended by external examiners, is further enhanced by regular visits from various other University staff, who provide staff development, including support for delivery through teaching observation. External examiners also make regular visits to coincide with examination boards, meeting staff and students and reviewing student work. Students described meetings with external examiners and confirmed that they have access to external examiner reports. The review team identified the strong working relationship between University staff and PC staff and students, which supports the enhancement of students' learning opportunities, as a **positive feature**.

26      Annual programme reporting operates effectively. The reports, completed by the College programme directors using the University template, include clearly presented data on applications, admissions, student profiles, achievement and career destinations, and comment on student evaluation and staff development activity. Data is produced both by the College and the University. Data analysis undertaken by the University within the annual monitoring process allows comparative student retention, progression and achievement to be monitored, as between home and College students and also across the University's partners. Outcomes for College students compare well with those in home provision, and although graduates are not eligible for appointment to public service posts in Greece (as the degrees are categorised in Greece as 'post-secondary' rather than higher education), there are wide employment opportunities in the private sector, and College graduate destination tracking indicates that employment rates are considerably higher than national rates for new graduates.

27      Programme action plans generally identify and follow through features of good practice and issues raised by external examiners. The College programme committee, which is constituted in line with University requirements, including student representation, considers annual programme review reports, moderator/link tutor reports and external examiner reports. Programme reports and external examiner reports are considered by the relevant University School Learning and Teaching Committee or its subgroup, feeding into the School annual reporting process. Deputy Deans of Learning and Teaching maintain oversight of the School provision through consideration of the range of reports. Complete reports are also considered at institutional level by the Collaborative Provision Committee, which produces an overview report for AQSB.

28      Programme directors' formal responses to the external examiners, which are considered and elaborated upon by the moderator/link tutor before despatch to the external examiners, generally address identified strengths and weaknesses and set out actions taken or to be taken. Senior staff gave an example of the effective use of external examiner

feedback for enhancement, concerning the development of the dissertation module in the BSc Food Science and Technology programme.

29    Quinquennial programme review is informed by a self-evaluation document, together with a substantial package of supporting documentation, and a review event. Review panels (which include external and student membership) and programme teams are supported by clear and useful guidance in the Academic Handbook, which sets out the University's requirements in considerable detail.

30    A combined programme and partnership review was held at PC in 2012. The review report records an evaluative review of the provision, scrutiny and discussion covering core elements such as programme design, resources, assessment, learning and teaching, student support and staff development. The programme teams were commended on the development of innovative programmes demonstrating the integration and synergies within agriculture, food production and business, and on the manner in which they had made the journey towards a UK-regulated higher education system. The programmes are due for review in 2016-17.

## Assessment

31    The University has effective processes for maintaining academic standards through assessment processes at PC. The University's assessment regulations apply. The College receives comprehensive and useful information from the University about assessment. The institutional assessment strategy, and associated policies, regulations and procedures, are presented in user-friendly terms in documents designed to be easily accessible to academic staff and students across Schools and Collaborative Partners: the Understanding Assessment Guide for Partners and individual School Assessment Guidelines for Partners. College staff have ready access to these guides, both electronically and in hard copy, and confirmed their usefulness.

32    Assessment strategies for the PC programmes, as agreed at programme approval and set out in programme specifications and student handbooks, incorporate a wide variety of assessment modes: seen, unseen and practical examinations, multiple-choice tests, individual and group projects, portfolios, dissertations, and professional placements/internships.

33    The College programme team is responsible for drafting assessments briefs, examination papers and marking schemes, and determining marking criteria. These are scrutinised by the external examiners in accordance with University requirements and approved by the moderator/link tutor, who is empowered to impose changes where necessary to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained and that, for the franchised programme, equivalence is maintained with the UK provision.

34    PC staff mark and second mark assessments and provide feedback to students. They receive extensive support in undertaking these tasks via the University's and Schools' assessment guides referred to above and through staff development sessions provided by visiting University staff. Marked student work, included within module boxes containing a range of module information, is made available for scrutiny by the moderator/link tutor and the external examiners on pre-examination board visits to the College. Module boxes are also made available electronically, allowing viewing by external examiners who are unable to make a pre-examination board visit. The associated University School tracks marking outcomes through receipt of the marks awarded by both first and second markers. Students are clear about what is expected of them in assessment, and said that feedback on their assessed work is helpful, and set out against clearly defined marking criteria.

35       Visiting University staff provide staff development on plagiarism avoidance, and information about the University's procedures for dealing with suspected unfair practice is readily accessible to College staff via the Collaborative Provision Handbook. The College uses plagiarism-detection software and, in response to student feedback, this is also available for students' use, helping them to develop their understanding of plagiarism and to support their learning. The review team identified as a **positive feature** the extensive support in teaching, learning and assessment provided by the University, in particular through guidance documentation and the provision of staff development to PC teaching staff.

36       External examiners, who are appointed by the University and who report specifically on PC provision, confirm that they have sufficient assessed work available to enable them to make judgements on standards. They confirm that standards are comparable with those of similar programmes delivered in the UK; that assessments, assessment criteria and marking schemes are set at the right level; and that internal marking is fair. External examiners comment that moderation of examination scripts and coursework is embedded within the College and that the standard of feedback provided to students is generally good. External examiners visit the College regularly (typically in the pre-examination board period, as noted above), reviewing student work and meeting students, College staff and visiting University staff. The external examiner system works well in supporting College staff in effectively discharging their responsibilities to ensure the fairness of assessment and the maintenance of standards.

37       Examination boards, conducted in accordance with University requirements, enable sound judgements to be made about the achievement of PC students. They are held at the University (with video links to the College), chaired by a senior member of School staff and administered by the University's Academic Registry. Moderators/link tutors and external examiners attend as required.

38       Any partner students' appeals against academic decisions are made through the University's appeals procedure. PC students' ready access to tutors, including part-time staff, allows them to raise any concerns initially at programme level. Students are aware of formal appeals processes, including the right to progress matters through the University, and expressed confidence that, if necessary, they could find all relevant information in handbooks.

## Quality of learning opportunities

39       Prospective students make applications via the College, which coordinates local admissions activities (including interviews and tours of the College), makes initial checks as to whether admissions criteria are met, and submits applications, including those involving recognition of prior learning, to the International and Partnership Office. Applications are considered and, as appropriate, approved within the associated School by moderators/link tutors, with advice and training made available by the International Office, Admissions Office or UK NARIC (the national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications) where required. The College communicates decisions on admissions to applicants. Entry requirements, set by the University, include contextualisation for Greece (Greek Apolytirion of Lykeio, with a score of at least 15 out of 20 in two modules relevant to the course; results in the same modules obtained in the General Entrance Examination with an average of 15 and above). Applicants without formal English language qualifications (International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or equivalent) may establish proficiency through the University's online English test, which provides an effective alternative to formal qualifications. Students described the admissions process as smooth and efficient. The review team concludes that the admissions process is transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes.

40      Students, who said that they felt they belonged to both Cardiff Metropolitan University and Perrotis College, explained their reasons for choosing a Cardiff Metropolitan University programme at Perrotis College: the prestige and reputation of a UK degree, study in English and the associated employment opportunities, the College's focus on both theoretical and practical learning, and the financial advantages of studying in Greece, including lower fees than would apply in the UK. International students had sought opportunities to study abroad.

41      The College is responsible for the induction of new students, in line with University guidance indicating essential content: enrolment; presentations; tours; meetings with relevant staff; question and answer sessions; the programme relationship with the equivalent University programme and/or School; student handbooks; quality assurance and student engagement; programme structure; attendance and assessment deadlines; and health and safety. Partner staff are supported by a pack containing guidance notes and a slide presentation. Students confirmed that they had been provided with a comprehensive and useful induction, supplementing the information in the very detailed programme handbooks, introducing them to the campus and physical learning resources, and easing their initial apprehensions.

42      In accordance with the University's commitment to working in partnership with students, the Collaborative Provision Handbook identifies student involvement in the quality process as one of the cornerstones of the University's processes, involving the use of student feedback, student representation and participation in quality assurance mechanisms, and periodic student meetings with moderators/link tutors, external examiners and, on a rolling basis, with the Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor.

43      The students whom the review team met included the President of the Perrotis College Student Union (SU) and a number of student representatives. They described the College's student representation system, as set out in the programme handbooks. Programme representatives, at least one from each year of each programme who are elected by their peers, receive a briefing on their role from College staff, and last year received guidance from visiting University SU representatives. They attend and actively participate in programme and staff-student liaison meetings. Programme committee meetings, which the moderator and link tutor generally attend, provide a good opportunity for students to scrutinise, comment on and receive staff feedback on external examiner reports, moderator/link tutor reports and annual programme reports, as well as to raise any matters of student concern.

44      Student survey feedback is gathered through end-of-semester online module evaluations, exit surveys and the i-graduate Student Survey. Students said that they receive feedback from module evaluation, as reported at the programme committee meeting; meeting minutes confirm this. Actions taken in response to student feedback have included upgrades to laboratory equipment and the provision of student access to plagiarism-detection software to support their learning. Annual Programme Review reports which, as noted above, are considered at the programme committee meeting, provide a summary report on the outcomes of the annual graduate exit survey and of module feedback, with appropriate actions taken. The University is currently progressing enhancements to module evaluation data analysis and the formalisation of feedback to students, in line with its Student Evaluation Policy. The review team identified the extent and effectiveness of student engagement at PC as **positive features**.

45      The University SU has strong links with student representatives in partner institutions, maintaining contact through visits, email, telephone and online videoconferencing. This was noted as good practice in the QAA hybrid review of the University in May 2014. Students whom the review team met described meetings with

University SU representatives on their visit to PC in 2015, when SU representatives gave a presentation on the SU support available to students, met staff and toured facilities. With the introduction of a new SU Development Assistant position, a formal schedule will include an SU visit to at least one international partner each year, while contact is maintained with others.

46      The SU offers online student representative training through the SU website, which can be accessed by all University students, including those at partner institutions, and training was provided to PC students during the SU visit to the College. The University provides funding to enable student representatives from collaborative partners to attend training at the University. A PC student benefitted from this opportunity in 2013, and the current College SU President is scheduled to visit Cardiff in 2016. The review team identified the University Students' Union's engagement with students at PC, to enhance their University educational experience, as a **positive feature**.

47      The moderator/link tutor, other University staff and external examiners also maintain effective links with staff and students through visits to the College and via email and online videoconferencing. The periodic review panel met with students (as well as staff) during their visit in 2012, and a group of PC students, including students whom the review team met, had the opportunity to feed back on their experience during an online video meeting with the Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor in 2014.

48      PC students have access to the University's electronic resources, including library services, the Students' Union Pages and Student Services. Student access to and use of library and IT services are facilitated by a series of short videos incorporating on-screen demonstrations. The quality and sufficiency of physical learning resources are checked at partner approval, programme validation and periodic review. Following concerns reported in moderator/link tutor reports about the sufficiency of laboratory equipment, the College has made financial provision to improve these resources, and students confirmed the helpfulness of these improvements. More generally, students are happy with the resources available, including the online learning materials. Students value the 'learning by doing' focus of the College, in particular the work experience opportunities that are either integrated into the curriculum or undertaken voluntarily and supported by the College's network of links with business.

49      College staff teaching on the programmes are approved at validation, through scrutiny of CVs, including assessment of competency in English. CVs of any new staff are submitted to the relevant Academic School for scrutiny, wherever possible prior to the new staff member beginning to teach University students. All College staff currently teaching on the University programmes hold master's or doctoral qualifications.

50      The moderator/link tutor is charged with investigating and reporting on any staff whose performance they consider to be below standard. Lesson observations conducted by the moderator/link tutor, together with student feedback analysed and evaluated by College and University staff in programme monitoring, are used effectively to monitor and maintain teaching quality. The effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms is exemplified by the College action taken in response to student concerns about the accessibility of part-time teaching staff and the use of Greek by some tutors in class. Both matters have been fully and satisfactorily resolved.

51      Staff development opportunities, which are monitored in annual and periodic review, are provided locally by the College with support from University staff, in particular in relation to learning, teaching and assessment strategies and quality assurance; via access to University staff development resources online; and through the organisation of a University annual partner training event. The University is providing financial support to six College staff

members who are working towards UK Higher Education Academy fellowship. Locally, staff participate in conferences, research projects and joint collaborative projects with industry, and contribute to publications. College on-campus conference facilities provide the opportunity for staff and students to engage with leaders in their fields. Moderators/link tutors carry out teaching observations, and they and other visiting University staff regularly facilitate and provide staff development. Recent sessions have covered ethics support (a session that students also attended), committee administration, annual programme review reporting, developing materials for module boxes, and assessment levels. As noted previously, the extensive support in teaching, learning and assessment provided by the University, in particular through guidance documentation and the provision of staff development to PC teaching staff, is considered a strength of the collaboration.

52      The University personal tutoring policies are adjusted to suit the local context of the TNE provision. The appropriateness of student support mechanisms at PC was considered at programme approval and monitored at periodic/partnership review in 2012. Student perceptions of the support received are gathered through both the student representation system and student evaluative feedback, and this information feeds into the annual monitoring process. Students value the support provided by their personal tutors, and confirmed the accessibility of staff, including part-time staff.

# Information on higher education provision

53      The Collaborative Provision Handbook provides extensive information and guidance on the provision of information to collaborative partner students and prospective students; clearly sets out the processes for approving public information and requirements for the use of the University logo; and references further sources of information, including the University's Public Information Handbook, the Student Charter and QAA information and guidance. There are detailed requirements with respect to the content of prospectuses, which include available student support services; a statement regarding the University's Equal Opportunities and Race Equality policy; an overview of library and learning resources; details of the admissions process; and fees information.

54      With respect to the PC provision, following internal checks on accuracy and style, and sign-off at institutional level, draft publicity materials are submitted for approval to the University Partnership Manager, who seeks advice from moderators/link tutors and Communications and Marketing. Thereafter, moderators/link tutors undertake ongoing checks. The International and Partnership Office monitors the accuracy of partner website information. Students confirmed the accuracy of pre-entry information provided to them.

55      On enrolment, students receive the following direct from the University: personal login details for accessing the student portal, with links to the Student Charter, the Student Handbook and the Student's Guide to Studying on a Cardiff Metropolitan University Programme at a Partner Institution. The Student Handbook includes key information regarding regulations, complaints, appeals, unfair practice and resources.

56      The Student's Guide to Studying on a Cardiff Metropolitan University Programme at a Partner Institution welcomes partner students as part of the global University and as members of the Cardiff Met Students' Union; describes the University's ethos, approach to learning and teaching, and structure; sets out the features of the University's collaborative provision, including helpful explanations of key terms; explains partner students' relationship with the University and the available support services, with links to associated online information; and addresses frequently asked questions, including questions concerning induction, finding information about the programme and regulations, making a complaint and appealing against an academic decision. All the students whom the review team met had seen and referred to the guide. They find it a very useful ongoing resource, in particular as a

prompt to seek further information to extend their understanding. The review team identified the University's Student's Guide to Studying on a Cardiff Metropolitan University Programme at a Partner Institution, which promotes partner students' understanding of the University and their relationship with it, as a **positive feature**.

57      Programme handbooks, completed using the University template and approved and signed off by the associated University School, include a wealth of useful information.

58      In response to a recommendation of the 2014 QAA review, the University reviewed and, where necessary, instigated revisions to local complaints processes across all its partners, to ensure consistent implementation of University processes. Programme handbooks set out details of these procedures, including a link to the University Academic Handbook, and provide clear information on the avoidance of unfair practice. PC students' ready access to tutors, including part-time staff, allows them to raise any concerns at programme level. Students are aware of formal complaints and appeals processes, including the right to progress matters through the University, and expressed confidence that, if necessary, they could find all the relevant information in handbooks.

59      Award certificates are issued by the University, then couriered to and distributed by the College. Transcripts refer to PC as the location of study and English as the language of instruction/assessment. Certificates refer to the transcript as providing this information.

# Conclusion

## Positive features

The following positive features are identified:

- the strong working relationship between University staff and Perrotis College staff and students, which supports the enhancement of students' learning opportunities (paragraph 25)
- the extensive support in teaching, learning and assessment provided by the University, in particular through guidance documentation and the provision of staff development to Perrotis College teaching staff (paragraph 35)
- the extent and effectiveness of student engagement at Perrotis College (paragraph 44)
- the University Students' Union's engagement with students at Perrotis College, to enhance their University educational experience (paragraph 46)
- the University's Student's Guide to Studying on a Cardiff Metropolitan University Programme at a Partner Institution, which promotes partner students' understanding of the University and their relationship with it (paragraph 56).

## Recommendations

Cardiff Metropolitan University is recommended to take the following action:

- keep under review the sufficiency of its own discipline expertise, to ensure its continuing capacity to monitor the content and delivery of the Perrotis College-validated programmes effectively (paragraph 21).

**Cardiff Metropolitan University's response to the review report**

Cardiff Metropolitan University is pleased to receive the report arising from QAA's review of its partnership arrangements with Perrotis College: Greece. The University considers this a very successful outcome and welcomes the five positive features highlighted in the report which endorse the University's own perceptions of its areas of strength. The University is open to opportunities for continuous improvement and will take action to address the QAA team's recommendation (an area also identified through the University's own quality processes) by reviewing the sufficiency of its arrangements to ensure its continuing capacity to monitor, effectively, the content and delivery of validated programmes.