



## Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of All Nations Christian College Ltd, October 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 All Nations Christian College Ltd (the College) has made commendable progress with implementing the action plan from the October 2016 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

### 2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 68 undergraduate and 26 postgraduate students on the programmes, which are validated by the Open University. This compares with 63 and 35 respectively at the time of the October 2016 HER (AP). The BA (Hons) in Biblical and Intercultural Studies was revalidated in 2017. There are five full-time management, administrative and academic staff and nine part-time staff with academic and administrative responsibilities. A Recruitment and Training Administrator for the MA programmes was appointed in March 2017. No other changes have been reported since the 2016 HER (AP).

### 3 Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The College has made commendable progress in addressing the recommendations and continuing to develop and monitor progress with the areas of good practice identified in the 2016 HER (AP) report. It has built upon the existing strong community ethos of the College (paragraph 4), further strengthened good practice in placement policy (paragraph 5) and extended the wide range of external partnerships (paragraph 6). Actions to address the three recommendations have been fully implemented. A policy to ensure timeliness in the provision of feedback to students has been consistently applied (paragraph 7), the Teaching and Learning Policy has been revisited and revised (paragraph 8) and the distinction between internal and awarding body review processes has been clarified (paragraph 9). Students confirmed that timely action in response to the recommendations has had a demonstrably positive impact on the quality of learning opportunities provided and on the student experience. They also confirmed that information provided by the College is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

4 Enhancement processes underpin the strong community ethos, exemplified by the weekly 'Kick-off' meetings, which promote a positive environment for staff-student engagement. Twice-weekly tutor group meetings provide mutual support, and there are twice-termly individual formal tutorials. An open door policy for academic and pastoral consultations is supplemented by additional support from the Personal Development Tutor, which is highly appreciated by students. Staff-student engagement is promoted through the Student Committee, working with the two Head Students, and termly student body meetings where issues raised are conveyed to the Principal. There are scheduled weekly meetings of the Head Students with the Leadership Team, which ensures clear communications with the student body. Student representatives are involved in Programme Committee meetings and in the revalidation of programmes. Student representation extends to all levels in

consultation and decision making, including the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), Academic Board (AB) and the Board of Trustees.

5 The College continues to strengthen good practice in the extensive range of placement partnerships, which enables students to develop wider interpersonal skills and promotes their understanding of the complexities of missionary work. The Ministry Placement is an integral part of the ethos of training in all programme levels, with clearly articulated aims and outcomes detailed in module specifications. Placement supervision and monitoring of student performance are assessed using a new set of feedback forms. Students value the opportunities to experience an increasingly wide variety of placements, working across diverse religious locations and organisations.

6 The wide range of external partnerships, which promotes the development of an enriched curriculum and enhances students' understanding of cultural and religious differences between societies, is a pivotal and continuing feature of good practice. Staff have recently visited mission agencies across Europe to foster further partnerships. Students appreciate being able to attend services at multi-cultural churches to enhance their knowledge and understanding of religious differences and practices.

7 Actions have been implemented to ensure that assessment feedback is timely and that feedback schedules are consistently applied to support student academic development. Following discussions at the Undergraduate Committee (UC), the QAC and the AB, it was agreed that all work should be returned within five working weeks, and the agreed schedule is consistently applied. Staff training on the process for returning marked work has taken place. Processes have been put in place to monitor student satisfaction with timeliness of return of work, and feedback through programme evaluations and feedback to committees.

8 Action has been taken to revise the Teaching and Learning Strategy to better reflect the range and level of provision, and clearly identify how the aims of the strategy are to be achieved. A revised strategy, aligned to Expectation B3 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, was agreed by the teaching team and submitted to the awarding body as part of the recent revalidation of the BA programme. Implementation will be monitored by QAC, the Examinations Board and the University in its monitoring and review processes. Tutors have recently received a range of training to support achievement of the strategy, including enhancing teaching and learning skills; marking and moderation; and IT and copyright skills.

9 The Vice Principal (academic) has undertaken training with all staff to articulate the differences between the University's review processes and the internal periodic review of programmes to ensure the full engagement of staff. Tutors who met the review team confirmed that they have a clear understanding of the requirements of University reviews and the internal monitoring and review process.

10 The College's Admissions Policy is reviewed annually, and criteria for applications are available on the website. Applications are monitored and processed by the Recruitment and Training Administrators in consultation with programme leaders, following interviews by tutors. Applicants to the MA programme complete a document critique as an additional entry requirement. Students are assisted with visa applications and receive a pre-arrival information pack, and orientation sessions over a five-day period, prior to commencing academic studies. English language competence, assessment of prior qualifications, and suitability to study at the proposed academic level are subject to robust processes to ensure that students satisfy legal and academic requirements. Students confirmed that English language entry criteria for all levels are clearly specified and tested. Compulsory interviews and a requirement for three referees ensure a genuine intention to study. The Application

Complaints and Appeals Policy provides clear procedures for admissions complaints, including appeals to the University.

11 The College conducts termly and annual programme monitoring and review, in addition to annual monitoring by the University. The University conducted an annual monitoring review of all of its awards delivered by the College, and recommendations were addressed by the College. Monitoring reports by programme leaders include comparative module evaluations over five years, which are discussed by UC, Postgraduate Committee (PC), QAC and AB, including student representatives of each committee. Reports review module marks, student opinions and external examiners' comments. The College provides written action plans to external examiners after QAC and AB approval. A comprehensive end of academic year student survey is addressed and responded to following staff discussion. Further monitoring and review took place for the recent successful programme revalidation, including feedback from current and former students, staff and external mission agencies (employers), and the revalidation process resulted in some programme modifications. Outcomes of internal annual monitoring processes are used effectively for enhancement of programmes.

12 Responses to a number of student issues (about library stock, appropriate use of library space for private study, and improvements to the Personal Development Planning Handbook and to the virtual learning platform) demonstrate student engagement in improvements to their programmes. Further improvements have taken place as a result of University feedback, including improvements to the timeliness of return of marked student work and addressing staff development needs. All students were involved in a SWOT analysis to inform the development of a new five-year strategy. Students participate in staff recruitment, including providing written feedback on interviews.

13 Retention rates on the majority of programmes are normally 100 per cent. For the undergraduate cohort that commenced in September 2014-15 and comprised 28 students there have been no failures or discontinuations; two students have deferred and two have transferred to other institutions. Of 73 undergraduate-level students in the 2015-16 cohort, one had discontinued for health reasons and four had deferred for personal circumstances at the time of the return. Retention rates on the MA programmes are also 100 per cent, although as student numbers are very small and many of these are studied over a three-year period it is difficult to make generalisations about achievement levels from the data available. However, postgraduate students are normally successful in gaining an award.

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

14 The College continues to demonstrate highly effective engagement with the Quality Code. The successful programme revalidation in 2017 ensured that the College engaged with programme specifications, the Quality Code, relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. The College responded fully to the recommendations of the approval panel before final approval of the award for five years. External examiners report consistently that academic standards are comparable with those of other higher education institutions.

#### **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 Dr Elizabeth Briggs, Reviewer, and Professor Nicholas Goddard, Coordinator, on 11 October 2017.

**QAA2005 - R9796 - Nov 17**

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2017  
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB  
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557050  
Web: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)