

## Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of CEG UFP Ltd, December 2014

### Annex 6: Amsterdam FoundationCampus

#### Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the monitoring team concludes that Amsterdam FoundationCampus (AFoC) is making commendable progress following the December 2013 [Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight](#).

#### Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 Amsterdam FoundationCampus (AFoC) continues to offer the Undergraduate Foundation Programme (UFP) in Business and Economics, with a modified curriculum incorporating advanced maths to meet progression requirements. A new pathway in Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics (PPLE) was added in September 2014 articulating to a PPLE degree. The new pathway has a module in International Relations, already validated in other FoC centres, replacing the existing UFP module in Business. Development of a Master's Foundation Programme (MFP), which was under discussion with the University at the time of the 2013 Review, has made little progress since then.

3 There were 94 UFP students enrolled at AFoC in December 2014 (78 Business and Economics, and 16 PPLE), with about 30 more students expected to enrol in January 2015. This overall total of around 124 students compares to 80 students in 2013-14. All students are from outside the EU. AFoC's current staffing comprises three support staff, including the Centre, Head, and 10 teachers, one full-time and the rest sessional, although some of the latter have weekly teaching loads broadly similar to a full-time appointment. This is a modest increase in sessional teaching staff compared to December 2013.

#### Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

4 AFoC is continuing to build on the good practice identified in the 2013 report. It has no less than three of the FoC network's subject leaders, who continue to play a pivotal role, undertaking curriculum planning and producing schemes of work, writing assessments, and working with tutors who deliver modules in other FoC centres. A training event for subject leaders in June 2014 had addressed generic issues such as approaches to assessment and integrating English language development into the academic curriculum. Subject leaders also receive guidance from the Chief Academic Officer.

5 Personal tutorial arrangements continue to be effective. Students reported they receive themed group tutorials as well as scheduled one-to-one sessions with their personal tutors. Personal tutoring arrangements have become more formalised; AFoC operates within central guidelines which is contextualised to meet the specific needs of students studying outside the UK. Students commented on the friendly and supportive nature of personal tutoring. There are also arrangements for identifying and supporting students at risk. The majority of teaching staff at AFoC are sessional; they are involved in staff meetings and are able to access developmental activities.

6 The strong working relationship between AFoC and the University, identified as centre-specific good practice in 2013, has been continued and enhanced. Links between staff at AFoC and the University have been specified more closely, so that more direct contact with relevant staff at the University has been developed. Teaching staff commented on subject development opportunities at the University, and students felt well supported by the learning resources provided by the University, as well as the special day which the University ran for students in each of the UFP pathways. Progression review meetings are now regularly held between AFoC and the University, enabling AFoC to access information relating to the progress of its alumni enhancing its approach to learning and teaching.

7 The essential recommendation, that no further students should be admitted until a written and legally binding agreement with the University was in place, has been met. The agreement was signed in February 2014. The progression Annex only covers Economics and Business and does not mention the new PPLE programme, but the latter does not guarantee progression to the University so its omission is not significant.

8 Progress at AFoC with the advisable recommendations arising from the 2013 review was considered by the monitoring team. Staff have electronic access to the Academic Quality Manual (AQM), and noted its value in terms of their teaching and student support inputs. They had discussed the AQM but could not recall receiving the formal training inputs mentioned in the self-evaluation document. The monitoring team was told that subject leaders played a proactive role in using the AQM with other staff. The Centre Head had attended a two-day review meeting as part of the periodic review of the UFP, and subject leaders are involved in writing module-related material; however, there was little awareness at AFoC of the current position in relation to this periodic review. Under the revised arrangements for student representation, AFoC had identified a student engagement champion. Student representatives confirmed they had been briefed on their role and had received the FoC Student Representative Training Handbook. There had been a move towards student chairing of the Staff-Student Liaison Committee, but the timing of the monitoring visit meant that students had no knowledge of their representation on the FoC Programme Committee.

9 Desirable recommendations in the 2013 report included introducing academic oversight of the individual centres. AFoC had been subject to the new FoC process of Centre Audit, and an audit report had been produced identifying good practice and making recommendations for action. In response to the desirable recommendation that a structured staff development policy should be developed and implemented, staff at AFoC are aware of the new continuing professional development (CPD) fund and had made applications for staff development support. There is also evidence of training and networking for support staff and English teachers. However, the intention to introduce a system of peer review is still in progress, and staff are seeking support from the central CPD fund in order to carry out peer observation across other FoC centres.

10 The new PPLE pathway (see paragraph 2) does not guarantee progression to the University, which specifies additional admission requirements including a higher level of English language competence. The monitoring team was told students are informed, before entry, about the absence of guaranteed progression, and students confirmed this. However, a PPLE offer letter did not indicate that the intended pathway had no guarantee of progression, and the AFoC Prospectus gives no indication of the progression status of PPLE students, although it does mention the guarantee of progression in relation to Economics and Business. For students who cannot progress to the University, AFoC has contingency plans to support them in finding an alternative programme.

## **Section 4: The embedded colleges' use of external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education**

11 In its self-evaluation document, AFoC states that the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) is implicitly and explicitly used throughout the FoundationCampus network, but it also notes that AFoC staff have limited experience of the UK higher education system, although they receive a full induction into how the FoundationCampus and its programmes operate and should be delivered. The revised AQM reflects the Quality Code. Staff at AFoC are aware of the AQM and its relevance to their roles (see paragraph 8), but did not think they had received formal training in the use of the AQM. The Centre Head explained that the Quality Code is being implemented through AFoC policies and procedures, although these are not specifically attributed to the Quality Code.

## **Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit**

12 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's and its embedded colleges' 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 and its embedded colleges of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

13 The monitoring visit was carried out by Alan Hunt, QAA Officer, and Professor Brian Anderton, Reviewer, on 2 December 2014.

**QAA1103b - R4390 - Feb 15**

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2015  
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000  
Email [enquiries@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@qaa.ac.uk)  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786