



Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Anglo American Educational Services Ltd, November 2022

Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that Anglo American Educational Services Ltd (AES) is making commendable progress since the [November 2021 monitoring review](#).

Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 The total number of undergraduate students studying on a range of programmes in 2022 was 536 - an increase from 433 in 2021. Of these, 16 students were enrolled on virtual internships and 180 on in-person internships which have been resumed in 2022. Student numbers have reverted to pre-pandemic levels with the easing of international travel restrictions and a gradual return to face-to-face teaching. There has been an appropriate increase in the number of staff to support the growth in student numbers with four new adjunct faculty staff appointed in 2022 and additional staff in student services and to support internships.

3 AES has secured approval from its new School of Record (SOR) - the University of Connecticut (UConn) - to offer selected modules from the home campus catalogue for teaching in-person by AES adjunct instructors in London.

Findings from the monitoring visit

4 AES is making commendable progress with its action plan. The panel reached this conclusion by considering the Annual Monitoring Return, reviewing the documentary evidence provided and conducting online meetings with staff and students. Findings indicate that AES has made commendable progress over the past 12 months in continuing to extend the features of good practice identified in the 2020 Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight (RSEO) review in ways that facilitate the transition to a post-pandemic learning environment and add value to students' learning experiences.

5 Recruitment and academic processes operate effectively, and AES continues to widen and deepen existing modes of operation, and develop initiatives that facilitate responsive relationships with its US university partners. This process ensures that provision for academic and experiential learning remain fit-for-purpose and meet the needs of students. In conjunction with its partners, the AES ensures communications remain strong through regular face-to-face and virtual meetings with staff based on home campuses in the US. This allows for the effective daily sharing of perspectives with senior staff from the home universities who are working temporarily at the London Centre. In the past year, AES has expanded opportunities for forming new partnerships in the US and enhancing relations with a variety of smaller higher education partners. To extend the range of courses available to students, AES has finalised agreements with London South Bank University and Salford University in the UK, as well as the University of Connecticut (UConn) in the US.

6 AES continues to maintain and strengthen good practice in managing internal academic processes within its committee structures. The Academic Committee functions effectively as the primary forum for discussions on maintaining standards and good practice, both in respect of the requirements of UK higher education and of its US partners. On a less formal basis, heads of department meet weekly to discuss operational matters. In addition, AES has recently established the Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG) Committee to facilitate staff and student awareness of emerging issues in the post-pandemic global environment. To enhance students' learning experiences in this area, AES has introduced a Diversity Day aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of diverse cultures. Students spoke positively about their engagement with this activity.

7 The Centre also ensures that good practice is implemented and enriched in respect of course delivery. AES's staff recruitment policy ensures that candidates are suitably equipped to carry out designated responsibilities. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified, and staff members have access to the Faculty Handbook. This provides adjunct lecturers with detailed information about teaching responsibilities and contractual matters. To ensure classroom delivery remains fit-for-purpose, teaching observations take place, with senior academic staff members reviewing results, which are fed back to the individual lecturer. In addition, feedback provided by students in mid-term surveys, and end-of-term information collected by US partner universities, is also used to gauge the effectiveness of teaching delivery. Staff development initiatives introduced in 2022 include support for recently appointed adjunct lecturers to design new courses, subsequently approved by US partners. Ongoing encouragement is given to staff to participate in conferences focused on international education taking place in Europe and in the US.

8 In 2022, AES has introduced significant initiatives aimed at facilitating students' transition to face-to-face learning. To augment existing levels of support, the London Centre is currently recruiting additional staff in student services, and has produced comprehensive job descriptions for a Placements and Programme Coordinator, Placements Lead and Programme and Visa Co-ordinator to facilitate this. To bolster provision in experiential learning, AES has created a new, senior management post - the Head of Experiential Learning - which has been filled by an existing staff member with substantial knowledge and experience in that area. To provide additional support for student health and wellbeing, AES has concluded an arrangement with a wellbeing organisation that allows students to book counselling sessions online and attend relevant events. To increase the levels of student engagement, the AES has recently introduced a Student Ambassador system allowing students to volunteer to undertake designated responsibilities that include providing feedback from students in formally scheduled meetings with senior staff and informing students of results.

9 AES continues to balance effectively the differing requirements for credit-bearing internships with the diverse aspirations and needs of students from a variety of universities who seek placements. For example, although UConn makes successful completion of internship seminars an obligatory component of placement programmes, students confirmed that seminar components are not required by every university. In response, to accommodate the needs of students and staff members, AES has adopted and implemented a uniform approach to internship requirements, procedures and practices by providing guidance in the Faculty Handbook, the Internship Handbook, and the Participant's Agreement, which students are required to sign. Opportunities have been created for every intern to engage actively with placement team members.

10 AES offers virtual, as well as face-to-face, internships and has introduced initiatives aimed at improving the quality of virtual placements. For example, staff members have implemented an attendance system for monitoring placement hours to ensure virtual placements meet university requirements, and developed an online workshop focused on

career building to deepen and widen the skills base for students participating in online internships.

11 In accordance with the QAA Action Plan, AES is developing and supporting new initiatives for in-person internships aimed at offsetting the significant decline in host companies previously willing to take interns. In 2022, for example, the London Centre has introduced consultancy projects such as an open access train operating company and a global online hospitality platform. These projects allow small groups of students to undertake academic projects for designated companies as an alternative to independent internship assignments. In addition, the placement team is exploring internship opportunities in new areas, including with an international bank and with a company which aims to help dairy and cattle farms convert waste into fuel-cell-grade hydrogen, and with the Temporary Work Government Authorised Exchange visa (GAE) scheme.

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

12 AES employs a wide range of external reference points to ensure that academic and experiential provision meets the standards and quality expectations set by its many US university partners, US accrediting and regulatory bodies, and reflecting the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). In the case of its US partners, AES has used the feedback provided by officials at home campuses and senior US academic and administrative staff members visiting the UK. This allows the London Centre to inform course development and generate initiatives for enhancing students' learning experiences.

13 The Centre works closely with accrediting and regulatory bodies to improve the quality of its provision and ensure that standards expected by UK bodies continue to be met. AES is an Associate Member of the Forum on Education Abroad and follows the Forum's *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*. Staff members have participated in conferences in international education taking place in Chicago and Milan. AES is also an Associate Member of the American Association of Study Abroad Programmes in the UK (AASAP), which supports workshops, such as one held on mental health. AES had been accredited by the Common Sense Compliance and AIM Secure as a safe place to visit, stay and work. In addition, UKVI has approved AES's CAS allocations for 2022 and renewed the Centre's licence to September 2025.

14 Expectations set out in the Quality Code serve as essential reference points for approaching and maintaining consistency in standards and the quality of students' learning experiences on courses approved by a wide variety of US and UK partners. Senior staff members from US partners attend AES Academic Committee meetings and are included in regular discussions about the relevance of the Quality Code.

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 Tommie Anderson-Jaquest, Reviewer, and Simon Ives, QAA Officer, on 22 November 2022.

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