



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Bath Spa Global LLP, March 2018

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 Bath Spa Global LLP (the provider) has made commendable progress with implementing the action plan from the [March 2017 Educational Oversight - Exceptional Arrangements](#).

2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 Bath Spa Global LLP (the provider) remains a limited liability partnership between Bath Spa University (the University) and Shorelight Education. The provider retains its original aim of enabling international students to progress onto Bath Spa University degrees. The University continues to accommodate the provider in its premises on the main University campus at Newton Park. An interim Vice-Chancellor led the University from August 2017 until the new Vice-Chancellor took up post in January 2018. The provider employs a full-time managing director, a full-time programme leader, and four part-time academic tutors (1.0 FTE). The University meets the administrative needs of the provider across the full student life cycle.

3 The provider offers a level 4 international year leading into level 5 of specified University programmes in social science or business and management. The provider continues to teach the initial stage of an extended master's in Business and Management on behalf of the University. At the time of the visit there were 10 undergraduate students enrolled on the level 4 international year, while seven were studying at level 7. Bath Spa Management Board decided to close the provider from September 2018 due to declining student numbers. Consequently, the provider has been closed for recruitment from the end of January 2018.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

4 This was the first monitoring visit since the last full review took place in March 2017. The review team considered documentation and held meetings with students from both programmes and with staff from the provider and the University. Topics for discussion included the context for the planned closure of the provider, arrangements for student admission and annual monitoring of the provision. The discussion explored the further development of the provider's good practice in supporting students and the dissemination of that practice across the University. The provider has made commendable progress with implementing the action plan from March 2017, which has been fully implemented. The provider has also made commendable progress in engaging with relevant external reference points. The overall outcome has been informed by the following findings.

5 The last review in March 2017 identified as good practice the highly effective formal and informal support mechanisms available to students, which have a positive impact on their personal development and academic progression. In the Action Plan, the provider identified two action points, both of which have been fully implemented. Firstly, the provider's academic staff shared their experience and good practice at the University's Learning and

Teaching Symposium in July 2017. This achieved the intended aim of supporting enhancement in other subject areas across the University. Secondly, the provider's academic staff have introduced a process of self-reflection into the students' end-of-term reports. The design of the reports enables students to actively participate in their own learning goals and to incrementally improve their skills of reflection and analysis over the academic year. Staff reported that the previous cohort of students had been pleased with this innovation, which they had requested during the early stages of their studies.

6 The University manages recruitment and admissions for the provider's programmes in accordance with its Admissions Policy. The University's International Relations Office manages recruitment directly and the International Admissions Team, including the specialist Visa Compliance Team, manage admission. This team checks the evidence of an applicant's English language proficiency and ensures that their academic qualifications meet the University's academic entry requirements. The provider's academic staff interview all prospective students either in person, by telephone or using teleconferencing facilities. Applicants are required to submit a personal statement and an academic reference from their last place of learning. The personal statement should indicate the reasons for the application and the reference should set out previous experience and indicate whether the applicant is suitable for their proposed programme of study. The Provider uses the interview and personal statement to evaluate an applicant's genuine intention to study. Students confirmed that the admission arrangements had explored their interest in studying their chosen programme as well as their proficiency in English language.

7 For quality assurance purposes, including annual programme monitoring, the University designates the provider as a field (or department) within the College of Liberal Arts. The University quality assures the provider's programmes using its standard arrangements. The Provider's Managing Director is a member of the College of Liberal Arts School Board. The University has a comprehensive method of annual programme monitoring, called Academic Developmental Reporting (ADR), which it revised for use from 2017-18. The University characterises its approach to annual review and monitoring of programmes as integrated and enhancement-led. The process uses available data on an ongoing basis to inform planning, and support enhancement and risk management, throughout the academic year. The University's Academic Developmental Reporting process aims to disseminate good practice, excellence and innovation and to develop a collegial approach and shared responsibility for timely problem solving.

8 The University's annual quality monitoring of the provider for 2015-16 followed its process for that year. In 2016-17, the University conducted a major review of its curriculum and introduced a new academic framework, during which it suspended its previous method of annual quality monitoring. The provider was not part of the curriculum review and re-approval process undertaken by the University. The University's annual quality monitoring of the provider for 2016-17 relied on analyses of external examiner reports, student survey information, and assessment outcomes. The University has stated that it considered the risk in the provider not completing its formal annual quality monitoring process in 2016-17 to be low and acceptable. Nevertheless, the provider's students are fully engaged as partners in evaluating the quality of their learning experience through a diverse range of approaches. This has been effective in securing change and improvements to learning and teaching, for example the teaching of students in groups of similar ability.

9 The provider's declining recruitment of student numbers has been commented on above in paragraph 3. In 2017-18, the provider has recruited a total of 17 students, of whom five are studying the International Year One Business, five the International Year One Social Science, and seven the extended master's programme in Business and Management. All students began their studies in September/October 2017, except one who began in January 2018. By comparison, the provider had previously recruited 23 students in 2016-17

and 31 in 2015-16. All students from the earlier cohorts progressed successfully to either level 5 of the University's undergraduate degrees or to the next stage of its MA Business and Management. The provider uses the University's student record system to track the performance of former students and to compare their performance with that of other international and home students.

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

10 The provider and its host University are making commendable progress in using the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The provider relies for its quality assurance arrangements on the University, which has recently conducted a curriculum review and introduced a new academic framework. In doing so, it has given further detailed attention to reviewing individual policies and procedures in relation to external reference points for UK higher education. The provider and University ensure that the governance arrangements align with national baseline regulatory requirements.

5 Background to the monitoring visit

11 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.

12 The monitoring visit was carried out by Professor Alan Jago, Reviewer, and Dr Anne Miller, Coordinator, on 13 March 2018.

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