



## Specific Course Designation: report of the monitoring visit of BRIT College Ltd, February 2017

### Section 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 BRIT College Ltd (the College) has made commendable progress with implementing the action plan from the February 2016 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

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

2 At the time of the monitoring visit there were 557 students enrolled on the College's level 5 Higher National Diploma (HND) in Business, offered on behalf of Pearson Education. This represents an increase of seven per cent in total student numbers since the last visit. The 2014-15 cohort, comprising 213 students, completed their studies on 21 December 2016. The HND programme continues to be the College's sole higher education provision.

3 Six new teaching staff have joined the HND programme and a new Student Liaison Officer post has been created. The role of Academic Director has now been vacated and replaced by a Teaching and Learning Support Team.

### Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

4 In the College's Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers - HER AP) report there were three features of good practice, four recommendations and one affirmation. The College has made commendable progress against all four recommendations and the affirmation and it has sustained all of the features of good practice and developed them further. Meetings with both staff and students revealed that they share a common understanding of enhancement and student employability. Given the nature of the student body, which is largely mature and seeking education to develop their existing employability, this indicates significant progress.

5 In response to the four recommendations, the College's new programme approval process formalises its internal programme approval procedures. It integrates with the College's annual quality cycle and aligns with *Chapter B1* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code). Students confirm their engagement with the procedure when changing study units for the Pearson programme. The College's Enhancement Strategy, and the redrafting of interconnected policies, articulate and disseminate its approach to enhancement. The tracking of a live action plan ensures the application of the Enhancement Strategy in all College processes. The updated terms of reference of the College's Academic Board indicate that it maintains oversight of the Enhancement Strategy. The electronic flagging system, at the heart of the College's Attendance and Retention Policy, centres on a follow-up process and student action plans to support students at risk. Robust attendance figures and submission rates of 100 per cent indicate the success of this approach. Systematised internal procedures optimise the College's responsiveness to student feedback. The College's size means that student feedback arises largely through informal mechanisms, but College meetings and surveys record and monitor responses to the

feedback. There is also student representation in all cohorts and representatives are trained and attend a range of the College's committees. A Student Council has not been formed.

6 The College has developed its three features of good practice and one affirmation. Employability remains a core feature of the College and underpins the affirmation around securing academic standards. A work-based placement unit, masterclasses, careers advice and an Employer's Forum are evidence of a highly focused approach, supported by Pearson and praised by students. Detailed programme specifications continue to surpass the College's formal obligations to Pearson Education. For example, the new specification for the Regulated Qualifications Framework version of the HND Business is in student-friendly language and works in tandem with detailed and thorough unit handbooks. Students appreciate the content and focus of this approach. By establishing a Teaching and Learning Support Team, the College demonstrates continued support of its diverse student body. Students articulate the well defined structure with great clarity and appreciation, underscoring the significance of this approach to their learning. The College has completed all outstanding actions from the HER action plan.

7 The College has further developed its rigorous admissions process. Staff process interviews only if candidates provide satisfactory documentation. The addition of literacy, numeracy and ICT assessments, along with a conversation about each student's intentions for study, inform the admissions panel's final decisions. Non-native English speakers, or candidates who have not studied for the final two years of school in English, must demonstrate English language proficiency of International English Language Testing System (IELTS) level 5.5 or above. Mature candidates, who might not hold formal qualifications, can draw on professional qualifications and/or work experience. Increasingly, incoming students have a suitable level 3 qualification. The College informs candidates of their application status throughout the course of the admissions and induction processes. This approach has resulted in significant improvements to admissions standards, as well as retention and achievement, and continues to fulfil a widening participation brief for the local community.

8 The College has revised its annual monitoring review process to encompass a broad spectrum of activities throughout the year. The process draws on national developments to inform College decisions, which the College Strategic Plan subsequently reflects. The College also draws on QAA Quality Reviews and Pearson reports. There is now more data-based analysis and review and this has been used to revise policies and procedures. This monitoring has resulted in subsequent improvements, such as the increased academic profile of new students, higher submission rates and higher achievement grades.

9 The retention rate for students has continued to improve and of the 178 students enrolled in Sept 2015 there was 95 per cent retention, while for the 107 students enrolled in February 2016 the rate is 96 per cent. Students report that the new Attendance and Retention Policy measures, together with valued support from the Teaching and Learning Support Team, are very effective in ensuring attendance, academic achievement and a high level of pastoral care. The achievement rate for the cohort that completed their HND programme in December 2016 was 91 per cent. Some students did not make their final submissions due to sickness and personal issues but were not ready to take advantage of extenuating circumstances. Learner destination data is currently only prospective.

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

10 College policies and procedures align with the Quality Code. Teacher Development Days have included staff training sessions on the Quality Code, including some led by QAA staff. The College encourages, and funds, teaching staff to become fellows of the Higher

Education Academy (HEA). Many teaching staff have achieved HEA fellowship and this provides an institutional awareness of the Professional Standards Framework. Through its Pearson programme, the College engages with the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), previously the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). Given the business focus of its Higher National Diploma, the College also references several Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies, such as the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. From 2017 the College will take part in the National Student Survey (NSS) for the first time. The College's consistent working with many different external reference points is fully embedded throughout its higher education provision.

## **Section 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 Mark Langley, Reviewer, and Jacqueline Young, Coordinator, on 1 February 2017.

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