



CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd

Recognition Scheme for Educational
Oversight Review by the Quality Assurance
Agency for Higher Education

April 2016

About this report

This is a report of a review under the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd. The review took place on 5 April 2016 and was conducted by a panel, as follows:

- Professor Chris Gale
- Professor Debbie Lockton.

The main purpose of the review was to:

- make judgements about the provider's delegated responsibilities for the management of quality and improvement of learning opportunities
- draw a conclusion about whether the provider's public information is reliable
- produce a commentary on how effectively the provider discharges its responsibilities for academic standards
- report on any features of good practice
- make recommendations for action.

A summary of the [key findings](#) can be found in the section starting on page 2. The [context](#) in which these findings should be interpreted is explained on page 3. [Explanations](#) of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 4.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.¹ More information about this the review method can be found in the [published handbook](#).²

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=202

Key findings

The QAA panel considered evidence relating to the educational provision at CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd (CAPA), both information supplied in advance and evidence gathered during the review visit itself. The review has resulted in the key findings stated in this section.

Judgements

The QAA panel formed the following judgement about CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd.

- The panel has **confidence** that CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the learning opportunities it provides for students.

The QAA review panel also concluded that CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd **satisfactorily manages** its responsibilities for academic standards in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners.

Conclusion about public information

The QAA panel concluded that:

- **reliance can** be placed on the information that CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

The QAA panel identified the following features of **good practice** at CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd.

- The systematic and strategic approach to peer review of teaching, which contributes to the quality of student learning (paragraph 2.7).
- Faculty and staff development, which are carefully planned and appropriately supported, and which encourage the integration of research into teaching (paragraph 2.11).
- The approach to assessment, which seamlessly integrates relevant aspects of US and UK approaches to higher education (paragraph 1.6).
- The approach to student academic and personal support, which is holistic in design and delivery, and valued by its recipients (paragraph 2.10).

Context

CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd (CAPA), formerly CAPA International Education Foundation Ltd, is an international education organisation based in Boston, Massachusetts. It provides study abroad programmes for students registered with a wide range of US colleges and universities, who enrol in academic courses and internships as part of their US degree requirements.

CAPA has been delivering study abroad programmes since 1972, and now has centres in Argentina, Australia, China, Ireland and Italy, as well as in London, which is the focus of this review. Its mission is to provide meaningful experiences that challenge and inspire students to analyse and explore complex political, cultural and social landscapes within urban environments. Through its commitment to personalised learning, global connections via technology, and collaborative learning communities, it aims to prepare students to live and work in a globally interdependent and diverse world.

CAPA's responsibilities normally include designing syllabi, hiring and monitoring teaching faculty, providing teaching and residential accommodation, and offering academic and personal orientation and support for students. Its courses are subject to the formal approval of students' home institutions and the agreement of CAPA's head office in Boston. Credits for CAPA courses are issued by the home institution or CAPA's School of Record (the University of Minnesota). CAPA itself does not offer academic credits. Formal agreements are in place for all such partnerships, and all students at CAPA London are enrolled in US-accredited, degree-awarding institutions.

Detailed findings about CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd

1 Academic standards

How effectively does CAPA fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1 CAPA provides study abroad programmes for students registered with a wide range of accredited US colleges and universities, who enrol in academic courses and internships as part of their US degree requirements.

1.2 CAPA has been successfully evaluated by the Forum on Education Abroad. As the only recognised standards organisation for international organisations arranging and implementing study opportunities for US undergraduates overseas, the Forum is an important and relevant external reference point. It undertakes an intensive and comprehensive review, which includes academic standards, assessment and internship provision.

1.3 Nevertheless, CAPA does not have direct responsibility for academic standards, but operates on the basis of several different partnership and credit transfer arrangements based on formal agreements. For example, for customised programmes the institution delivering the programme at CAPA's London premises gives academic credit, and CAPA's responsibilities are restricted to providing non-academic services; for programmes involving the University of Minnesota as School of Record, the University validates CAPA courses for US credit. In both cases, CAPA works with the responsible body to ensure that academic standards are maintained; evidence from the School of Record made available to the review panel confirms that its performance in doing so is satisfactory.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

1.4 The external reference points for the setting and maintenance of academic standards are those of the student's home university or the School of Record. Assessments are approved and ratified as part of CAPA's School of Record and Academic Advisory Board oversight of course syllabi. CAPA has also voluntarily introduced an external examiner system: samples of marked work are provided to the external examiner for comment, and the external examiner report is formally considered by the Academic Management Team. The review panel found this to be a positive engagement with the UK system. Other mechanisms, such as the regular presence in London of faculty from the School of Record and other partners, ensure that all relevant reference points are taken into account.

1.5 CAPA makes appropriate use of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), which it regards as a key reference point for the maintenance of academic standards. The review panel notes that CAPA has worked to align its procedures (including assessment and the oversight of internships) with the Quality Code, and considers CAPA justified in describing the Quality Code as embedded in its structures.

How effectively does CAPA use external scrutiny of assessment processes to assure academic standards (where applicable)?

1.6 CAPA sees no contradiction between UK and US academic expectations. Its Quality Handbook offers detailed information about its teaching and learning arrangements, which embed both sets. The review panel noted that CAPA has worked

to bring existing procedures in line with the Quality Code, and works to bring together the best of the US and UK systems, the latter including an examination board, learning outcomes, the voluntary external examiner system, internal moderation, and a peer review process (see paragraph 2.7). The approach to assessment, which seamlessly integrates relevant aspects of US and UK approaches to higher education, is **good practice**.

The panel concluded that CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd **satisfactorily manages** its responsibilities for academic standards in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

How effectively does CAPA fulfil its responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1 As noted in paragraph 1.2, CAPA was evaluated by the Forum on Education Abroad Quality Improvement Programme in May 2012, as an organisation committed to quality improvement and the Forum's standards of good practice. It maintains effective processes for course development, approval and modification. Course approval involves scrutiny by the Academic Management Team, a draft syllabus being approved by the Vice-President of Academic Affairs, the Academic Advisory Board and the University of Minnesota.

2.2 As School of Record, the University of Minnesota undertakes a quinquennial site visit; other partner institutions review provision similarly. The most recent School of Record report, which was broadly consistent with its predecessors, was particularly positive about the support provided for students prior to departure, during their time at CAPA, and post departure.

2.3 CAPA's Student Council meets fortnightly, providing formal collective opinions and advice, and contributing to policy development in a spirit of partnership. CAPA also undertakes student evaluation surveys on arrival, at mid-term, at the end of each course, and on departure, summarising their contents for the Academic Advisory Board. The Director of Academic Affairs discusses course evaluations personally, as appropriate with the responsible teaching faculty, providing additional support and resources where necessary. The review panel noted that one course that attracted course equivocal evaluations led CAPA's Executive Team to effect a radical redesign; the successor course is well regarded.

How effectively are external reference points used in monitoring and evaluation processes?

2.4 CAPA operates within the frameworks specified by its School of Record or other partner universities: while some scope exists for it to introduce locally relevant materials, any changes of significance are subject to pre-approval by the University concerned, and performance is subject to regular and detailed review.

How effectively does CAPA assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

2.5 CAPA provides teaching faculty with a bespoke handbook containing all policies relevant to their responsibilities. The Faculty Handbook is supplemented by newly developed online resources providing step-by-step guides and case studies of best practice, and offering a space for professional discussion and debate. Termly faculty meetings take place,

as do round table meetings and workshops focusing on teaching and learning. Their focus derives from sources that include student evaluations, faculty self-evaluations, direct requests and one-on-one meetings.

2.6 New faculty receive a welcome pack comprising the Faculty Handbook, grading guidelines, CAPA's Statement of Academic Standards and Policies, and a learning resources guide. They are also provided with an orientation visit, an induction to classroom technology, and a meeting with the faculty chair to discuss student expectations, class management, grading and assessment, peer review (all new faculty are peer reviewed during their first semester of teaching), and opportunities for continuing professional development.

2.7 In addition to the early peer review of new staff, all staff are formally peer reviewed by a senior member of academic staff on the basis of a pro forma that identifies key areas of focus and topics to be addressed. A recipient of peer review described the three-part process, which entails a detailed account of preparation, procedure and feedback, as extremely helpful, and as highlighting both strengths and areas for possible improvement, which were followed up by an action plan for delivering on the latter. The systematic and strategic approach to peer review of teaching, which contributes to the quality of student learning, is **good practice**.

2.8 Formal peer review is complemented by CAPA's encouragement of, and support for, informal peer review; the School of Record observes classes in its quinquennial site visit, and these procedures, together with evaluations by students, facilitate a granular approach to course evaluation that identifies any need for additional training or support.

How effectively does CAPA assure itself that students are appropriately supported?

2.9 Many CAPA students undertake internships. Protocols are in place for CAPA staff to evaluate the appropriateness of both host organisation and proposed supervisor, and of the learning to be achieved. The host supervisor completes a position description document detailing what the role involves, what support the student will receive, what benefits the student will gain, and what skills or experience he or she needs. These are monitored by the internship coordinator, who oversees internships on a continuing basis, through visits, spot checks, mid-term questionnaires and other forms of student feedback. All supervisors complete an end-of-internship evaluation of the student, whereby students are graded as unsatisfactory, below average, average, above average or outstanding; this assessment makes up five per cent of the final grade.

2.10 Students are supported by CAPA's Academic Management Team, internship staff, and programme and student services departments. Staff are available daily in office hours, with emergency support available on a 24/7 basis. The directors of these teams regularly review student feedback and monitor the advice provided by their staff, and students met by the review panel spoke warmly of the academic and pastoral support that they receive. In 2013 CAPA funded works to make its building accessible to students and staff with mobility and visual limitations; more generally, the Academic Services Adviser is responsible for coordinating support for students with additional needs, as well for as informing students on a regular basis of academic and social opportunities available to them, and for ensuring that all information (such as emergency contacts) is current and accurate. These arrangements are confirmed as fit for purpose. The approach to student academic and personal support, which is holistic in design and delivery, and valued by its recipients, is **good practice**.

How effective are CAPA's arrangements for staff development in relation to maintaining and/or enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.11 Teaching faculty members conduct a self-evaluation every semester to record development activities attended and specify future needs. Faculty development grants are available to support continuing professional development, and an annual Occasional Publication Series provides an opportunity for staff to publish their current research and teaching-related materials in a peer reviewed volume. Teaching faculty described CAPA's staff development as supporting their academic development. For CAPA's own staff, development opportunities include an annual conference, normally in London or Boston, where they can meet members of CAPA's other sites, and where best practice across sites is effectively disseminated. The faculty and staff development, which are carefully planned and appropriately supported, and which encourage the integration of research into teaching, are **good practice**.

How effectively does CAPA ensure that students have access to learning resources that are sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes of their programmes?

2.12 While student evaluation forms give only limited emphasis to learning resources, students confirmed the adequacy of such resources, as did the University of Minnesota's site visit report; the University's institutional agreement specifies that student support and resources are included in the consideration of new course proposals. CAPA's library houses all course texts and a range of additional texts to supplement them; students' access rights to other libraries in London are explained in a library guide.

2.13 The introduction of a Global Classroom Programme has led CAPA to make a considerable investment in resources. This enables students at CAPA London to connect through video, audio, sharing slides and a virtual whiteboard to other similarly equipped classrooms within the CAPA network. CAPA has also invested in a new learning management system, creating three new posts to provide continuing technical support.

The panel has **confidence** that CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the learning opportunities it provides for students.

3 Public information

3.1 The production and dissemination of information are managed through CAPA International Education in Boston, which produces brochures and marketing materials for all CAPA programmes at locations worldwide. Information is contextualised where appropriate through contact between Boston and local sites; this process, including sign-off and version control, is well understood.

3.2 Students described the information they receive as comprehensive, informative and accurate.

The panel concluded that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

4 Action plan³

CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd: action plan relating to the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight in April 2016						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review panel identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within CAPA:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the systematic and strategic approach to peer review of teaching, which contributes to the quality of student learning (paragraph 2.7) 	CAPA's approach to peer review ensures and enhances teaching, ultimately contributing to the good quality student learning opportunities that are specific to the demands of study abroad.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To continue administration of existing procedures, including the peer review of new staff, and the use of CAPA's current peer review pro forma and three-part procedure, which is followed by an action plan. To monitor and review peer review procedures, with a view to integrating feedback from local faculty and colleagues at other CAPA centres, as well as best practices from outside institutions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing By next review 	Faculty Chair	Academic Management Team	Peer review pro forma, meeting agendas

³ CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • faculty and staff development, which are carefully planned and appropriately supported, and which encourage the integration of research into teaching (paragraph 2.11) 	<p>CAPA supports and devises development opportunities for faculty and staff through a variety of mechanisms that meaningfully enhance the CAPA student experience, through their classes or otherwise.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To advance the administration of current development efforts, including faculty self-evaluation, development grants, Occasional Publications, and annual staff conference. 2 To monitor and review development procedures and opportunities, looking specifically to opportunities for faculty and staff to collaborate internationally, often virtually. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Ongoing 2 By next review 	<p>Academic Director</p>	<p>Academic Management Team</p>	<p>Items noted in number 1; relevant meeting agendas</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the approach to assessment, which seamlessly integrates relevant aspects of US and UK approaches to higher education (paragraph 1.6) 	<p>CAPA London administers a suite of assessment procedures tuned specifically to integrating best practices of US and UK higher education systems, resulting in high levels of confidence in CAPA's assessment of students.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 To maintain CAPA's confidence in its assessment procedures through its continuing facilitation of mechanisms including the examination board, quality (or faculty) handbook, integration of learning outcomes, voluntary external examiner, internal moderation, and peer review. 2 To monitor and review current assessment procedures, with a specific view to further integrating perspectives 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Ongoing 2 By next review 	<p>Academic Director</p>	<p>Academic Management Team</p>	<p>Processes and documentation listed in 1 and meeting agendas</p>

		on best practices from other institutions, both in the US and the UK.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the approach to student academic and personal support, which is holistic in design and delivery, and valued by its recipients (paragraph 2.10) 	<p>CAPA London provides students with excellent academic and personal support, through a variety of mechanisms within each of three student-facing teams: internships, program and student services and academics.</p>	<p>1 To maintain current levels of academic and personal support for students, through mechanisms including appropriate levels of staffing and staff training, emergency support, feedback and evaluation, and supporting and accommodating students with special requirements, as well as structured support for social opportunities.</p> <p>2 To monitor and review student support procedures at planned intervals throughout the year, with a specific view to further enhancing existing support mechanisms across CAPA's network of global study abroad centres.</p>	<p>1 Ongoing</p> <p>2 By next review</p>	<p>Academic Director</p>	<p>Academic Management Team</p>	<p>Mechanisms listed in number 1 and Academic Management Team annual meeting agenda</p>

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary. More details and formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [handbook](#)⁴ for this review method.

Academic quality A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, higher education providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

Academic standards The standards set and maintained by degree-awarding bodies for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Credit(s) A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education programmes of study, expressed as 'numbers of credits' at a specific level.

Enhancement The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

Good practice A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

Learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcome What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

Programme (of study) An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Public information Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

Widening participation Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

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⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=202