



Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd, June 2023

Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that CAPA The Global Education Network Ltd (CAPA) is making acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [June 2022 monitoring visit](#).

Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 At the time of the June 2022 monitoring visit, formal notification of a merger and change of ownership had been given. The change of ownership and merger with another study abroad organisation, CEA, has not yet resulted in a change of legal name; however, work has begun to rebrand as CEA CAPA Education Abroad. From a student perspective, there has, so far, been no material changes to the way in which CAPA operates. CAPA expects to see benefits from additional resourcing resulting from the new ownership and merger. So far, it has been possible to scale up the student facing team and introduce new roles such as that of Global Director for Internship based in London. More capacity is expected for business development as well as increased resources to enhance the ability to advise and guide students.

3 The academic year 2022-23 was the first opportunity for CAPA to return to full face-to-face classroom teaching since the pandemic restrictions. There are three sessions a year; each session attracts a new cohort of students who study with CAPA for the session and then return to their home university in the USA: in the fall/autumn 2022, there were 141 students; in spring 2023, 200 students; and in summer 2023, 161 students. There are 36 teaching staff (faculty) and 23 full-time, non-teaching staff.

Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The review team studied the Annual Monitoring Return, supporting evidence and supplementary documentation requested prior to the visit, and conducted meetings with staff at the CAPA site in London. Students who were undertaking the provider's six-week summer programme also met with the review team. Consideration of the evidence confirmed that CAPA has maintained acceptable progress since the CAPA review of June 2022 in continuing to monitor, review and enhance the quality of its higher education provision.

5 Student Learning and Development Outcomes continue to be embedded in relevant units of each syllabus to guide both formal and informal components of the teaching and learning agenda - an aspect also recognised by a review conducted by the CAPA-appointed team from the United States (US) during their visit in 2023. Students affirmed in their meeting with the review team, that they enjoyed their studies and CAPA's approach to learning, and had chosen this route to study abroad because of the courses offered and, for some, the opportunity for work-based learning internships alongside academic study.

6 The provider's internship programme has resumed in-person operation and continues to support the provision and management of internship arrangements. Students reported that some internship partners operated hybrid working patterns but they were also able to interact with staff on office days, and those who engaged in the programme gained a great deal from the experience and were well supported. They said they knew who to contact if there were problems, and these were dealt with quickly and appropriately. Senior managers reported that the merger arrangements had led to increased resource for internship administration and development; an evaluation of the impact of this change is to be undertaken by CAPA over the coming year.

7 CAPA has returned to face-to-face teaching and learning following pandemic restrictions, supported by resources in its virtual learning environment, and students said they enjoyed their classes. The timetable was arranged to facilitate students who engaged in the internship programme and, for those not following an internship, field studies around London were organised and students told the review team these were enjoyable and interesting. Social activity is well structured with a number of visits to cultural and historic sites subsidised by the provider; and students and staff share information about events through a weekly newsletter - which students said was useful in helping them get the most out of their time in London. The provider is developing a new approach to student evaluation which is managed by CAPA centrally in the United States and shared with the London management team through an online database. While the centralisation of data collection and management is helpful to the London management team, they may also find it useful to develop a local approach to using this information in developing, monitoring and sharing action plans and good practice.

8 The provider continues to support academic staff in the development of good practice through an induction process, a comprehensive Faculty Handbook, peer review and workshops, which have resumed on site. London staff are active in the development of an occasional publication series of books, collections of essays and research papers, to which all CAPA staff are invited to contribute. Staff said they valued their inclusion in the publication process as important in their personal development as researchers. The books are also used as a teaching resource.

9 CAPA has addressed the commendations and recommendations as set out in the QAA Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight 2021 report. The advisable recommendation to develop a formal process for approving and recording minor modifications to modules led to the deployment of a system in the summer term of 2023.

10 CAPA's London programme is aligned with the standards of their School of Record (SOR) - the University of Minnesota - which reviews and accredits its courses as equivalent to those offered at the University. The London programme is reviewed by the University of Minnesota and CAPA's Academic Advisory Board, which is made up of experienced academic and administrative professionals who have expertise in international education. The review team notes that CAPA London underwent a three-day review visit by a panel appointed by CAPA and the University of Minnesota in March 2023. This resulted in a judgement of 'exceeds expectations' for academic provision and student services, and 'meets expectations' for infrastructure, with a number of commendations and recommendations made. The report of the visit forms the basis of CAPA's action planning which is developed and monitored through the provider's centralised structures in the US - currently under review following the merger. The action plans were not available at the visit and the review team notes that the London site might benefit from the development of a local action planning process which sets out how local targets are determined, monitored and evaluated.

11 Student numbers following the return to face-to-face delivery are down by 8% on pre-pandemic levels. The academic year 2018-19 recruited a total of 547 students compared with the current academic year 2022-23 standing at 502. Student success rates are high. Only two out of the 502 students returned to the US without completing during 2022-23. The grade scale followed is based on the US system and range, and, with the University of Minnesota being the SOR, the Minnesota grade scale is followed. The majority of students are awarded grades A to C. During 2022-23, 11 F (Fail) grades were awarded.

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

12 To meet UK expectations for higher education, CAPA continues to align internal policies and procedures with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education where relevant and applicable to US Study Abroad programmes. The provider also ensures that provision meets the standards set by higher education institutions in the US, in alignment with the US Higher Learning Commission. Other responsible bodies include the Academic Advisory Board which provides advice on programme development and academic affairs, other individual university partners, and the Forum on Education Abroad which is responsible for ensuring that organisations delivering American study programmes abroad meet the criteria set for Quality Improvement Standards.

13 The external examiner role, which is not a requirement of the SOR in the US but which CAPA had previously created to act as a critical friend, was suspended during the pandemic. The review team was told that, under the new structure, they are currently seeking to appoint to the role for the 2023-24 academic year.

Background to the monitoring visit

14 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.

15 The monitoring visit was carried out by Dr Ruth Stoker, Reviewer, and Mr Alan Weale, QAA Officer, on 22 June 2023.

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