



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of CCP Graduate School Ltd, July 2016

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 CCP Graduate School Ltd (the School) has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision from the May 2015 [Higher Education Review \(Plus\) partial re-review](#).

2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 There have been no major changes since the partial re-review in May 2015. The School has approval from Pearson (the awarding organisation) to offer one higher education programme, the Diploma in Education and Training. The School is not listed on the public list of designated courses due to student finance being withdrawn following the unsatisfactory outcome of the Higher Education Review (HER) (Plus) in April 2014. The last cohort of students graduated in May 2015 and at the time of the monitoring visit there were no students enrolled on the programme. The School awaits a decision on its course designation application and is committed to restarting the programme as soon as approval is granted. However, the School acknowledges that it is unlikely that it will be able to admit any higher education students before the start of the 2016-17 academic year.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

3 Following the HER (Plus) partial re-review in May 2015, the School updated its QAA action plan by including proposed enhancement activities to address matters discussed in the visit report. The action plan states that the School's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) will be developed to include all quality enhancement activities and that its implementation will be monitored by Academic Board at each meeting and updated as appropriate. However, the School has not specifically defined the QIP as the mechanism through which it will manage quality assurance activity relating to higher education provision (paragraph 9). The evaluation of the individual QIP actions is over-reliant on information and data from a single academic year following the April 2014 original review.

4 The review team met senior staff and tutors during the monitoring visit, and considered the School's annual return and supporting documentation, particularly the School's updated action plan, the annual programme monitoring report and the external examiner's report (paragraphs 5, 7 and 8). The good practice identified in the report has been reviewed and developed, and the School's learner management database makes an effective contribution to monitoring student progress and engagement with the assessment process (paragraph 5). While progress has been made in responding to the six recommendations (paragraphs 6-10), the School needs to further evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken on aspects such as annual monitoring, action planning, and retention and achievement rates once the programme is reinstated and there is sufficient evidence to inform the evaluation process. In particular, monitoring and evaluation of student achievement data will provide evidence to support the view that the decline in the achievement rate recorded in 2014-15 was due to students suspending their studies when student loans were suspended in July 2014 (paragraph 12). The School has made

acceptable progress in responding to the good practice and recommendations set out in its action plan developed following the HER (Plus) partial re-review, with progress reviewed and reported by the Quality Team and at Academic Board meetings (paragraphs 5-10).

5 The School extended its good practice by offering the previous cohort of students extended micro teaching sessions in English and mathematics at levels 1 and 2 to build confidence in teaching practice and completing online assessments. The School operates robust internal verification systems and has responded to the external verifier's recommendations. The School has embedded its process for capturing and monitoring student submissions, assessment and achievement information. The modified learner management database, previously used solely for funding purposes, captures and monitors student achievement information. Relevant staff are able to gain information on student progress, including the number of attempts at each assignment. A monthly report on student progression was made available to staff so that they are able to more effectively monitor the progress of their tutor groups and plan resources more effectively. The meeting of assignment submission deadlines by students improved during 2014-15 through more rigorous tracking of student engagement with the assessment process. The new system has resolved security concerns regarding assessment and tracking, with data being held on an internal server and the information backed up regularly. Access to the system is only permitted by authorised users and is monitored. All academic staff are trained in the use of the system.

6 Since the HER (Plus) partial re-review, the School has reviewed its committee structure and has streamlined both the reporting lines and membership of the committees. School policies were reviewed and revised in August 2014 with further minor changes and editorial corrections being made in December 2014 and August 2015, the latter as part of the School's continuing enhancement work set out in the revised action plan. The full policy document is made available on the School's virtual learning environment (VLE) and policies relevant to students are published in the Student Handbook. The Annual Programme Monitoring and Review Policy and Procedure has been revised to remove repeated sections of text and correct inconsistencies in terminology. References to annual monitoring review in School documentation have been amended so that they align with current practice. The definition of key management information within the learner management database is currently being reviewed.

7 The Quality Team has a central role in the oversight of enhancement and other strategies for improving teaching, learning, retention and achievement. This team includes representation from all of the School's main committees. The Director of Quality compiles an overarching QIP which brings together actions from all the different committees of the School, the annual monitoring programme reports and those arising from external reports. The QIP is overseen and monitored by the Quality Team and, ultimately, the Principal.

8 The process for the consideration of external examiner reports and action planning is robust, strengthened through the work of the deliberative structure in identifying areas for improvement in relation to the external examiner system. The School has resolved the concerns raised during the HER (Plus) partial re-review, ensuring that only Part A of the external examiner report is made available to students through the VLE to protect students' anonymity. Action plans are shared with student representatives at the Staff Student Liaison Committee.

9 The School has strengthened its management of annual monitoring, with the Director of Studies now being responsible for overseeing the process in conjunction with other key staff. The responsibilities and timeline are set out in the Annual Programme Monitoring Review Policy and Procedure. The Programme Leader is required to complete a comprehensive pro forma encompassing key data and staff and student feedback; the

process includes consultation with lecturers and students. The report is presented to the Academic Board for approval annually and, in turn, the Board of Directors. The action plan resulting from the annual monitoring process now forms part of the QIP which is considered as a standing item at each Academic Board. However, the actions emanating from the 2014-15 monitoring report were not included in the QIP as a result of the programme being suspended in August 2015. While the development and monitoring of the QIP appear to be effective, the School has not specifically defined this as the mechanism through which it will manage quality assurance activity relating to higher education provision.

10 The School has developed an Enhancement Strategy which emphasises a student-centred approach to enhancement, with student representatives participating in all appropriate meetings of the School's management committees. Enhancement is an integral part of the agenda of Academic Board, the senior management team and the Staff Student Liaison Committee. The role of the student voice has been strengthened through training of the representatives and through the major role students have in the Quality Team.

11 The School Admissions Policy aligns with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) and outlines the key responsibilities for admissions within the School management structure. The arrangements for the recruitment, selection and admission of students are carefully documented and administered. The initial advice and guidance (IAG) interview, conducted by one of the core members of staff, helps applicants determine whether the programme is appropriate for them. Applicants with special needs are also identified through the IAG interview. Student needs for further learning support are identified through diagnostic testing. Overseas qualifications are reviewed against the UK National Academic Recognition Information Centre database. Students applying from overseas are required to provide evidence of English language proficiency. Interviews are conducted to determine applicants' English language proficiency, which must meet English Level 2 in Adult Literacy or a recognised equivalent standard. The School's Academic Board takes overall responsibility for admissions, and complaints and appeals can be made to the Principal.

12 Completion and achievement rates for the programme are considered at an assessment board. Overall annual progression and achievement rates for the programme are included in the annual monitoring programme report which is presented to Academic Board. The School successfully retained 99 students (74 per cent) on the programme in 2014-15 compared to 206 students (77 per cent) in 2013-14. In 2014-15, of the 133 students who started, 99 (74 per cent) completed the programme of which 63 (64 per cent) achieved the qualification. This compares with an achievement rate of 82 per cent (169 students) in the previous year. This decline in the achievement rate is due to 34 students (36 per cent) suspending their studies due to financial constraints when the student loans were suspended in July 2014.

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

13 A mapping exercise set out in the School's Quality Manual demonstrates how each of the Quality Code Expectations are met with selected indicators being used as the guiding principles for adoption of various policies and systems at the School. Extensive evidence is noted for the admissions process, annual monitoring and associated action planning, student engagement and the observation of teaching.

14 The School uses a number of further external reference points to help assure academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. These include Pearson's programme specification, unit specifications and assessment policies and procedures, the external examiner, and the matrix Standard whereby the School is assessed and measured

against, and accredited for, the information, advice and guidance provided to students. Following accreditation, the School has undergone a Continuous Improvement Check (CIC), whereby the external assessor considered supporting evidence such as the QIP, minutes of meetings with student representation, students' individual learning plans and student feedback. The CIC process informs continuous quality improvement and the School's wider quality assurance framework and engagement with the Quality Code.

5 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 Colin Fryer (Reviewer) and Mr Grant Horsburgh (Coordinator) on 12 July 2016.

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