CEG UFP Ltd

FoundationCampus

Embedded College Review for
Educational Oversight
by the Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

December 2013

Key findings about CEG UFP Ltd: FoundationCampus

As a result of its Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight carried out in December 2013, the QAA review team (the team) formed the following judgements about FoundationCampus:

The team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the academic standards of the awards it offers through its embedded college provision.

The team has **confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the learning opportunities it provides for students through embedded colleges.

The team considers that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers through embedded colleges.

Good practice

The team identified the following **good practice**:

- the contribution of subject leaders and subject groups to programme delivery and assessment (paragraphs 1.6, 1.9, 1.14 and 1.20)
- the well-structured student support delivered through a regular programme of structured personal tutorials (paragraph 2.21)
- the effective communication with, and integration of, sessional staff (paragraph 2.27).

Recommendations

The team also makes a number of recommendations for the enhancement of the higher education provision.

The team considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- secure greater awareness and detailed implementation of its Quality Assurance Manual across all embedded colleges (paragraph 1.11)
- expedite the implementation of periodic programme review (paragraph 1.16)
- put in place procedures that prevent the recruitment of students before a comprehensive written and legally binding agreement or contract is in place (paragraph 2.1)
- extend and enhance the effectiveness of its system of student representation (paragraph 2.12)
- remove any ambiguities arising from its public information and student acceptance letters (paragraph 2.24).

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for the provider to:

- expedite an enhanced and more consistent academic interaction with its higher education partners (paragraph 1.5)
- institute greater academic oversight of the individual embedded colleges (paragraph 1.15)
- continue to explore opportunities to obtain statistical information from its higher education partners (paragraph 1.35)

- develop and implement a structured staff development policy for all staff (paragraph 2.30).

About this report

This report presents the findings of the Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight[1] (ECREO) conducted by QAA at CEG UFP Ltd (CEG): FoundationCampus. The purpose of the review is to provide public information about how the provider discharges its stated responsibilities for the management and delivery of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities available to students.

The review applies to programmes of study that the provider delivers on behalf of Sunderland University, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), Coventry University, the University of Amsterdam, London South Bank University and the University of London. The review was carried out by Professor Brian Anderton, Professor Alan Jago, Professor Gaynor Taylor, Dr Carol Vielba (reviewers), Mr David Batty (review secretary) and Professor Peter Hodson (QAA officer).

The review team conducted the review in agreement with the provider and in accordance with the *Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook*.[2] Evidence in support of the review included the CEG self-evaluation and supporting documents including written submissions from the students of each embedded college, meetings with CEG staff at both the centre and each of the embedded colleges, staff of each partner university and students from each of the embedded colleges. Additional documentation was also provided by the provider and by the embedded colleges during the review visits.

The review team also considered the provider's use of the relevant external reference points:

- the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code)
- *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ)
- subject benchmark statements.

Please note that if you are unfamiliar with any of the terms used in this report you can find them in the Glossary.

FoundationCampus (FoC) is part of CEG. CEG was established in 1952 to deliver academic, creative and English language programmes in locations in a number of countries including the UK to prepare students for progression to university. Programmes range from GCSE, A level and International Bacalaureate to a BA in Fashion Design as well as a range of English language programmes at different levels.

FoC was set up in 2008 to prepare international students for progression to UK universities and initially comprised three centres, referred to in this report as embedded colleges. The partnerships were with the Universities of Coventry, Central Lancashire and London South Bank. There are currently five FoC embedded colleges in the UK, one in the Netherlands and one in the USA, although the latter was not considered as part of this review.

At the time of the review, the provider offered the following higher education programmes, listed beneath their partner university with student numbers shown in brackets after each programme as at November 2013:

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight
[2] www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/embedded-college-handbook.aspx

Coventry University

- International Foundation Programme (pathways: Business, Economics, Finance and Management; Computing, Engineering and Sciences; Law, Humanities and Social Sciences; Life Sciences; Art and Design) (362)
- International Diploma Programme (28)
- Master's Qualifying Programme (Business/Computing, Engineering and Sciences/Social Sciences) (77 studying three terms plus 27 studying one term)

London South Bank University

- Undergraduate Foundation Programme (pathways: Business, Economics, Finance and Management; Computing, Engineering and Sciences; Law, Humanities and Social Sciences; Life Sciences; Art, Design and Media) (74)
- International Diploma Programme (5)
- Master's Foundation Programme (two studying three terms)

Sunderland University

- Undergraduate Foundation Programme (pathways: Business, Economics, Finance and Management; Computing, Engineering and Sciences; Law, Humanities and Social Sciences; Life Sciences) (63)
- International Diploma Programme (7)
- Master's Foundation Programme (51)

University of Central Lancashire

- Undergraduate Foundation Programme (pathways: Business, Economics, Finance and Management; Computing, Engineering and Sciences; Law, Humanities and Social Sciences; Life Sciences; Art, Design and Media) (99)
- Master's Foundation Programme (16 studying three terms plus four studying one term)

The University of London

- Undergraduate Foundation Programme (pathways: Business, Economics, Finance and Management; Computing, Engineering and Sciences; Law, Humanities and Social Sciences; Life Sciences; Media) (157)
- International Diploma Programme (33)
- Master's Foundation Programme (pathways: Business; Engineering and Sciences; Law, Politics and Global Development; Education, Culture and Society) (47 studying three terms)
- University of London International Programme (23)

The University of Amsterdam

- Undergraduate Foundation Programme (Business pathway only) (51)
- Master's Foundation Programme (0)

The provider's stated responsibilities

Partner universities play no central role in the assurance of quality and standards in the three main FoC programmes. Although contracts state that they have the right to carry out a quality review process from time to time, this has not happened. At the time of the review, three programmes - the Undergraduate Foundation Programme (UFP), the International Diploma Programme (IDP) and the Master's Foundation Programme (MFP) - were offered and were all validated by NCFE, but the International Diploma and master's qualifying programmes will be validated by Pearson BTEC from January 2014. The self-evaluation document (SED) states that quality assurance of all programmes 'is managed entirely by

FoundationCampus via Academic Board'. The exception to this is London
FoundationCampus which began this academic year (2013-14) to deliver the University of
London International Foundation Programme, for which it is subject to the University of
London's quality assurance regime.

Recent developments

As indicated above, validation of the International Diploma and Master's Foundation
Programmes is changing to Pearson BTEC. The Amsterdam FoundationCampus is also a
recent development, accepting its first students in 2012. The London FoundationCampus
has introduced the University of London International Foundation Programme in addition to
the portfolio of three FoC programmes. Subject leaders were introduced in 2012-13 and
work across all the embedded colleges. Appointments are for one year, but may be
renewed. A description of the responsibilities of the post was provided for the review team.
This is an extensive role and gives subject leaders a key position in the maintenance of both
quality and standards.

Students' contribution to the review

Students studying on the provider's higher education programmes were invited to present a
submission to the review team. A submission was received from each embedded college.
Student representatives had provided the material for the submission in each case, but in
some embedded colleges their views had been sought orally with the written submission
prepared by staff. Students of each embedded college, and in some cases recent alumni,
met reviewers during the review visits. Current students were not always fully aware of the
student written submission prepared by their predecessors and, in the case where the
submission had been prepared by staff after discussion with students, the students
concerned informed reviewers that they had not seen the final document.

Detailed findings about FoundationCampus

1   Academic standards

How effectively does FoundationCampus fulfill its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1   FoC currently operates a network of five colleges in the UK, one in the Netherlands and one in the USA. The latter was not considered for the purposes of this review. All embedded colleges operate with progression routes agreed with the host university except for the London FoundationCampus, which is described as a hub and spoke model in which students study in a 'hub' based at Birkbeck College. In addition to being offered some opportunities for guaranteed progression to Birkbeck, students are supported in making applications via UCAS (the universities and colleges admissions service) to a number of University of London institutions (the spokes) with whom agreements exist.

1.2   The criteria for the choice of partner university includes the international focus of the university, the support available for international students and academic reputation. FoC is now periodically approached by potential partners and, in cases of interest, a letter of intent is issued followed by discussions leading to a contract. There are no current letters of intent. Signed contracts are in place with the partner universities for each of the embedded colleges considered in this review with the exception of Amsterdam, where the agreement is still in draft form, despite the fact that students have been enrolled since September 2012. However, the review team noted that three cohorts of students had previously been admitted to the Sunderland FoundationCampus (SFoC) prior to the contract being signed (see paragraph 2.1).

1.3   Contracts are reviewed every 10 years with the exception of those relating to the 'spokes' of the London FoundationCampus (London FoC) which are for three years in the first instance. However, more frequent operational reviews occur. For example, the review team learned that the UCLan FoundationCampus (UCLan FoC) holds quarterly meetings with its partner university to discuss resource issues. The Managing Director of FoC stated that he maintains close informal relationships with senior staff of the partner universities.

1.4   The partner universities play no formal part in the management of academic standards in the FoC embedded colleges, with the exception of the London FoC, which introduced the London International Foundation Programme from September 2013. This is directed by the London School of Economics and responsibility for quality assurance and management of standards rests with Univerity of London International Programmes. Hence partner universities only exercise oversight through their approach to student admission.

1.5   Annual monitoring reports are not formally presented to university partners and there appears to be little formal scheduled academic interaction between the two parties. It is **desirable** for FoC to expedite an enhanced and more consistent academic interaction with its higher education partners.

1.6   The embedded colleges are supported centrally by a team based in Cambridge which includes the Managing Director, the Chief Academic Officer and the Chief Administrative Officer in addition to sales and marketing, IT, finance and human resource staff. The Chief Academic Officer plays a key role in maintaining quality and standards across the embedded colleges, chairing programme committees, producing annual monitoring reports and liaising internally with heads of embedded colleges (known as centre heads) and externally with the appropriate quality assurance agencies. Each embedded college is managed by the centre head, supported by a Deputy and by teaching and

administrative staff. The latter includes a Curriculum Information Officer who plays a key role in managing timetables and assessments, and in ensuring students have access to the information necessary for a successful study period in the UK. A recent introduction has been the post of subject leaders. They are appointed from the embedded college teaching staff, but have a cross-embedded college role and are central to the maintenance of standards. FoC is also beginning to appoint programme leaders to manage individual programmes.

Academic committee structure

1.7 FoC has an academic committee structure comprising an Academic Board, chaired by the Managing Director to which the three programme committees report. These programme committees are currently chaired by the Chief Academic Officer. However, the review team was informed that with the development of the programme leader role, it was planned that programme leaders would take on the responsibility of chairing. In addition there are subject group meetings, chaired by subject leaders, which in turn report to the programme committees. All committees meet four times per year, once in each term. Programme and subject committee meetings are held using conference call facilities. There has as yet been no internal evaluation of this committee structure, which is relatively new, but the team was informed that this is planned.

1.8 In addition to the academic committee structure, FoC holds monthly business unit meetings which focus on financial issues, sales and marketing and compliance with Home Office (previously UKBA) requirements. The meetings also report on quality issues.

Programme standards

1.9 Three core programmes are offered: the Undergraduate Foundation Programme (UFP) which prepares students for entry to the first year of specified honours degree programmes, the International Diploma Programme (IDP) which prepares students for entry to the second year of specified honours degree programmes, mainly in business-related areas, and the Master's Foundation Programme (MFP) which prepares students for entry to specified master's programmes. The latter exists in one, two and three-term versions depending on the qualifications and level of English proficiency of students upon entry. Curricula for these three core programmes are common to all FoC colleges, although some modules may not be offered at all sites. Note that Coventry FoundationCampus (Coventry FoC) offers the same core programmes, but uses different names to avoid confusion with the University's own foundation courses. Standards were defined at the original approval event. Programme specifications are in place for all three programmes and detail learning outcomes which reflect the appropriate FHEQ level. The programme specifications include a mapping of learning outcomes to individual modules, although this is somewhat general in form. Individual modules are further supported by detailed schemes of work, produced by the subject leaders and including more detailed learning outcomes and indications of the assessment schedule.

Quality Assurance Manual

1.10 A FoundationCampus Academic Quality Assurance Manual has been produced and is available to all staff via the intranet. The Handbook is clearly written and details procedures for quality assurance including programme approval, annual monitoring and programme review.

1.11 Staff at the embedded colleges who met the review team were aware of the Academic Quality Assurance Manual, but were not always clear about processes such as annual monitoring and programme change. There was little understanding among staff of the purpose of the programme committees. FoC is **advised** to ensure detailed implementation of

its Quality Assurance Manual across all the embedded colleges, to secure
greater awareness.

Programme approval

1.12   The programme approval process detailed in the Academic Quality Assurance
Manual begins with a new programme development proposal, normally instigated by the
sales and marketing team and submitted to Academic Board. Academic Board determines
whether there is a case for the development of the programme and whether there are
sufficient resources in the embedded colleges to support it. Once authorised by Academic
Board, the programme proposal is subject to a formal approval event involving appraisal by
a panel, whose members are external to FoC, and its partner universities. Delivery of the
new programme cannot commence until any conditions set by the panel have been met.
No programmes have yet been subject to this process, as approval of the current suite of
programmes predates the production of the manual.

1.13   Minor changes to the existing programmes may be proposed by staff, although
there is some lack of clarity among staff about how such suggestions are progressed.
The review team was informed variously that such minor modifications were discussed by
the subject group and programme committee before being submitted to Academic Board or
that they were submitted directly to Academic Board.

Annual monitoring

1.14   Annual monitoring reports are produced by the Chief Academic Officer for each
programme using a standard form. Reports include individual embedded college statistics for
recruitment, completion and progression, comments on programme management, teaching,
learning and assessment and staff engagement and continuing professional development.
A summary of student feedback (and responses to this) and a response to external
examiners are given. External examiners' reports and an action plan for the following year
are attached. At the time of the review, only one set of reports had been produced, but these
were detailed and reflective. Since the creation of the subject leader role, subject leaders
also produce an annual report at module level, again using a standard template. For the
current year these will feed into the programme annual monitoring report. Annual monitoring
reports are discussed by the relevant programme committee before being submitted to
Academic Board.

1.15   Annual monitoring procedures focus on programmes, although they include
completion and progression figures for individual embedded colleges. The appraisal process
for centre heads sets targets in terms of recruitment and progression, and business unit
meetings review a number of key performance indicators such as performance against
budget, compliance, student numbers, performance and attendance on a monthly basis.
However, there is no process focused on the overall academic performance of individual
embedded colleges. It would be **desirable** that FoC instigates greater academic oversight of
its individual embedded colleges.

Periodic review

1.16   The Academic Quality Assurance Manual, which was introduced in 2012, states
that all programmes will be 'subject to a periodic programme review on a rolling schedule of
approximately every three years'. The review should involve the production of a SED and a
meeting between the programme team and a panel including external reviewers, university
partners and, where possible, former students. While the process appears thorough and fit
for purpose, the review team noted there have been no periodic reviews as yet, although
initial approval of programmes was in 2008. FoC is **advised** to expedite the implementation
of programme periodic reviews.

How effectively does FoundationCampus manage the assessment of students?

1.17   Subject leaders are responsible for setting the scheme of work, the assessments and the marking schemes for their modules. These are common across all the embedded colleges and are delivered by members of the subject group. All assessments for the whole academic year are set before the programme commences.

1.18   External examiners have an opportunity to comment on the assessments before these are released to students. Staff, other than those writing specific examination questions, do not see examination papers prior to distribution to the students.

1.19   The English curriculum is treated differently, with students prepared to sit either the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or assessments provided by the partner university. FoC has recently reviewed its English language provision to seek consistency of approach, while satisfying the different demands of each partner institution. The resulting 'English Project' produced a set of standardised learning outcomes for each term of study, which are documented in a central FoC framework informed by the internationally recognised Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) 'Can do' project. Local tests and requirements are then mapped against this framework. The review team considered this to have the potential to be a strong feature in the future.

1.20   Scripts are marked by teaching staff within the subject group according to the mark scheme provided by the subject leader. There is an internal moderation procedure in which at least 10 per cent of scripts and all borderline and failing scripts are second marked. Following comments by some external examiners, subject leaders are initiating pre-marking meetings to ensure more consistency between embedded colleges in the marks awarded. The review team considered the contribution of subject leaders and subject groups to programme delivery and assessment to be **good practice**.

1.21   A single assessment board is held to consider the results from all three programmes. It is chaired by the Managing Director and attended by the Chief Academic Officer, centre heads, subject leaders and external examiners.

1.22   Students indicated that assessment requirements were generally clearly communicated and they understood what was expected of them. Examination regulations for students are listed in the programme handbook which also lists the requirements for successful completion of the programme.

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

1.23   The IDP and the MFP are now accredited by Pearson, and students who successfully complete modules from these programmes will receive BTEC credits at level 4 (IDP), level 5 (two/three-term MFP) or level 6 (one-term MFP) of the FHEQ. The Undergraduate Foundation Programme is not at higher education level.

1.24   In its SED, FoC states that it uses subject benchmark statements where practical, but since its programmes are preparatory in nature, subject benchmarks are inappropriate in most cases.

1.25   The Academic Quality Assurance Manual details procedures for programme approval, monitoring and periodic review; however, the review team noted that not all these procedures are in use (see paragraph 1.16).

1.26　　The SED claims that the 'QAA Quality Code is implicitly and explicitly used throughout the structure of FoundationCampus'. Some evidence of this in terms of the maintenance of standards was evident in the processes described in the Academic Quality Assurance Manual. The review team was informed that an exercise was taking place mapping elements of the Quality Code to FoC processes and procedures. This mapping was due to report to Academic Board in December 2013. Centre heads were generally aware of the Quality Code and of the work in progress, as were many staff.

1.27　　The 2012 Review for Educational Oversight report following the review visit to the London Campus had been discussed at Academic Board and distributed to centre heads. Some but not all the centre heads saw its recommendations as relevant to their work.

How effectively does FoundationCampus use external examining, moderation or verification to assure academic standards?

1.28　　FoC currently has a team of four external examiners appointed from higher education institutions unconnected with the organisation: three covering specific subject areas within the UFP and one covering the IDP and MFP.

1.29　　A handbook is provided for external examiners explaining their role and responsibilities.

1.30　　External examiner reports are received by Academic Board, but any issues relating to a specific embedded college FoC are discussed directly with that college and a response given. Feedback on the dialogue between subject leaders and the external examiners was also available, while the centre heads, subject and programme leaders, where these exist, are all members of the central Assessment Board, and have access to verbal comments made by the external examiners at this Board. Staff indicated they access external examiner reports via the annual monitoring reports, and could quote an example of an external examiner making comments which had led to a modification in marking criteria. External examiner reports are also discussed at staff meetings within embedded colleges, and external examiners make occasional visits to different colleges; for example, the external examiner for the MFP had given a presentation to staff at SFoC.

1.31　　Students do not have access to external examiner reports except indirectly through their representation on programme committees. These committees receive the annual monitoring reports which include external examiner reports and a response to these from the Chief Academic Officer.

1.32　　The FoundationCampus Academic Quality Assurance Manual specifies a process for internal moderation of assessment outcomes. Staff with whom the review team met could explain the process of moderation and standardisation of marking employed. As well as sample cross-moderation within an embedded college, subject leaders undertook second marking of samples of assessed work, reviewing a sample of 10 per cent of scripts together with any fails to standardise marking standards across the different FoC embedded colleges. Where staff undertaking cross-moderation cannot agree the marking standard, the issue is escalated to the subject leader.

How effectively does FoundationCampus use statistical information to monitor and assure academic standards?

1.33　　A single student record system is in place for all the embedded colleges. Students' details are first entered on payment of the registration fee. This is prior to a formal offer and hence results in apparently high withdrawal figures. Data on enrolment, attendance and achievement is entered locally as it becomes available.

1.34   Enrolment, withdrawal, completion and achievement statistics are supplied to inform annual monitoring. The review team was informed that poor achievement figures would be discussed in both the programme committee and Academic Board meetings considering the annual monitoring report. While this was not evidenced through the available minutes, the team learned that at embedded college level poor achievement had been noted by the college management team. This had resulted in analysis of possible reasons followed by the introduction of change in, for example, teaching group size and composition to tackle the issues identified.

1.35   Detailed statistical tracking of students who have successfully completed FoC programmes and progressed to partner institutions is not available, although all embedded colleges reported anecdotal information obtained from discussions with partner staff, returning students or, in one case, the award ceremony. Embedded colleges told the review team that they were in continued discussion with their partners in the hope of obtaining more formal statistics concerning alumni. It would be **desirable** for FoC to continue explore opportunities to obtain statistical information concerning the success of its alumni from its higher education partners.

The review team has **confidence** in the provider's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers through embedded college provision.

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2   Quality of learning opportunities

How effectively does FoundationCampus fulfill its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1   The agreements between FoC and its University partners commit the former to articulating the infrastructure resources required for teaching and learning and arrangements for supporting students, and the latter to providing the resources and accepting FoC alumni onto the agreed progression routes. Where cohorts of students have started their programmes prior to such agreements being in place, as in the case of SFoC and Amsterdam FoundationCampus (AFoC), there is the potential for learning opportunities to be affected. FoC is **advised** to put in place procedures that prevent the recruitment of students before a comprehensive written and legally binding agreement or contract is in place.

2.2   Within the current range of student recruitment, adequate resources are available at all embedded colleges, although there have been issues arising due to the late booking of laboratory provision in some cases. If there is a significant increase in a particular area of recruitment, the centre head negotiates additional resources from the relevant University.

2.3   Students have access to the partner university's library, some IT resources and its student support facilities. They are also members or associate members of the universities' students' unions.

2.4   There is currently no virtual learning environment in place across FoC, but a central project is considering the acquisition of such a system to be deployed across FoC. Staff were aware of this and said that they had been consulted about user needs. Staff are currently supported by an intranet, FOCUS, and students by their own intranet, Magellan, which includes a personal student information page for each student.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

2.5   The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is used across FoC to benchmark its English provision.

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

2.6   Centre heads are responsible for recruiting staff and told the review team that they seek individuals with existing teaching experience, although not necessarily at higher education level, and/or experience of working with international students.

2.7   Sessional staff may be faced with a very short timescale between appointment and facing a class. In such situations the subject leader plays a key role in briefing the new teacher on the scheme of work and alerting them to any material available on the staff intranet.

2.8   The mechanism whereby assurance is gained concerning the quality of teaching and learning is through the process of lesson observation, which is the primary academic staff appraisal procedure. This is undertaken for all teaching staff annually by the centre head. For newly appointed and inexperienced staff, an early opportunity is taken to undertake lesson observation and, if necessary, this may be repeated. Staff have a meeting with the centre head at which verbal feedback is provided, and the process also generates an appraisal report and agreed action plan.

2.9   FoC has a learning, teaching and assessment strategy which was updated in January 2012. The strategy lists four key aims concerning approach to curriculum design and operation, efficient delivery and appropriate assessment of an inspiring curriculum, a personalised approach to students' experiences and playing to the strengths of all staff members.

How effectively does FoundationCampus make use of student feedback to assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

2.10   Student representatives are in place on all programmes and on all embedded college sites. Appointment appears an informal process with, in most cases, any students who express an interest in representing their peers being selected. As a result, some embedded colleges will have several representatives for each programme.

2.11   Staff-student liaison meetings are held at least termly in each embedded college and involve, in most cases, the student representatives meeting with the centre head and Curriculum Information Officer. Meetings are minuted and actions recorded. Good practice was noted at Coventry FoC where the new group of representatives had an induction to the role and were issued with a handbook explaining their duties. Minutes from staff-student liaison meetings at all the embedded colleges demonstrated rapid and appropriate response to student concerns.

2.12   Student representatives are members of the relevant programme committee, sometimes taking part by conference call. Most students who met the review team did not know what a programme committee was or what their role in it might be. Current students had not yet had an opportunity to attend such a committee. Some alumni, who recalled a meeting involving student representatives from other sites, appeared confused as to its purpose. It is **advisable** for FoC to extend and enhance the effectiveness of its system of student representation.

2.13   In addition to its student representative system, FoC seeks the views of its students via post-induction, post-module and end-of-course questionnaires.

How effectively does FoundationCampus assure itself that students are supported effectively?

2.14   An induction programme is provided for each course and, during this, each student receives a student handbook. Handbooks are produced to a standard, centrally produced template covering issues such as opening a bank account, registering with a doctor, dental treatment, the right to engage in paid employment and so on. Each embedded college supplies specific information for the UK city concerned. The review team noted that the information in the SFoC handbook concerning the right to work was incorrect for those students following the UFP.

2.15   Students who met the review team indicated that the induction had been useful.

2.16   Students also receive a programme handbook which provides general information about the programme as well as detailing assessment regulations, the FoC policy on academic and assessment offences, the policy and procedure for Academic Appeals and the policy and procedure to be used in cases of mitigation and extenuating circumstances. Students who met with the review team were aware of the nature of academic misconduct such as plagiarism, but less aware of policy concerning mitigation and appeals. Many students indicated that if they felt there was an issue they would seek advice from their tutor.

2.17   All the embedded colleges operate a personal tutor system with students meeting their tutors once a week. In most cases these meetings are as a group and follow a scheme of work, but students explained that they could seek a one-to-one meeting with their tutors at any time, emphasising that all staff were approachable and operated an open-door policy. The scheme of work covers personal issues, for example culture shock, and study skills, for example revision tips. It also describes key themes for each session and suggests activities and possible supporting resources.

2.18   Not all staff are personal tutors. Choice of tutors depends on both willingness and availability. A handbook is provided and explains the role.

2.19   All academic tutors can access Magellan, which tracks each student and allows individual staff to flag concerns such as poor attendance or poor performance against that student. Magellan operates a traffic light system and alerts personal tutors to possible problems, enabling early intervention.

2.20   Contracts with the individual universities specify access to a range of student services such as healthcare, counselling and careers advice.

2.21   Appreciation of the tutoring system and the approachability of staff was a consistent theme during meetings with students. The review team considers the well-structured student support, delivered through a regular programme of structured personal tutorials, to be **good practice**.

How effectively does FoundationCampus manage the recruitment and admission of students?

2.22   FoundationCampus recruits using a range of promotional material, its website, overseas fairs and a network of agents, and has several overseas offices in locations such as China. Agents are offered an online training package. Students who had been recruited

by agents generally reported satisfaction with the process. The review team was also informed of joint recruitment exercises with partner universities.

2.23   Admission enquiries are directed to the central team in Cambridge except in the case of China where they are handled by the Beijing office. All offers are made by the central team in Cambridge. There are clear criteria for admissions in terms of local and overseas qualifications in a range of countries. These are specified in the embedded college promotional literature and vary between colleges, despite the common programmes. Students who do not meet the standard entry requirements or who have any special circumstances (such as extra welfare requirements) are referred to the embedded college for approval before being accepted. The embedded college may discuss the candidate with staff in the partner university before indicating to the central team whether an offer should be made.

2.24   Except for the London FoC, Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) numbers belong to the partner university and CAS letters are issued by the universities. There is no standard offer letter from FoC stating the progression criteria to the chosen course. The promotional literature indicates that some courses may require more than a pass of the FoC programme, but does not state the level required. In addition, some progression destinations are capped in numbers (for example, Pharmacy at Sunderland, Physiotherapy at UCLAN and Architecture at Coventry). Students informed the review team that they had not been made aware of the exact criteria for progression, or of the cap, until their induction on arrival in the UK. Staff indicated variously either that details of progression were given by the agent or that students learned of these during their induction week. It is **advisable** for FoC to remove any ambiguities arising from its public information and student acceptance letters.

How effective are FoundationCampus' arrangements for staff development to maintain and enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

2.25   All newly appointed staff attend an induction process focusing on non-academic matters such as systems access, procedures and documentation. In addition, they are put in touch with the subject leader who explains the scheme of work and alerts them to any appropriate teaching material available on the staff intranet. New staff who met with the review team reported informal mentoring from the subject leader or other members of the team, but there is no formal mentoring scheme. There is no general entitlement to access to staff development in the partner universities, but some staff indicated that they received details of events and believed they were entitled to attend. Attendance at other external development events may be supported in terms of time and/or finance.

2.26   Staff development is provided on continuing professional development (CPD) days held each term. Sessional staff are paid at the 'administration rate' for attendance at these events which have covered topics such as 'Academic Monitoring for Success' and 'Active Learning Strategies' as well as dealing with specific international student problems. In future, CPD days are expected to be scheduled in the newly introduced reading weeks held before the examination period of each term. Encouragement and support of sessional staff to attend CPD days ensures effective communication with, and integration of, such staff.

2.27   The move to accreditation of the IDP and the MFP by Pearson was supported by staff development initially provided by Pearson to centre heads and then cascaded to other staff. This communication approach to embrace all staff, including sessional staff, is **good practice**.

2.28   All staff are subject to an annual appraisal. This is based on a lesson observation carried out, in most cases, by the centre head or their Deputy. Staff receive both verbal and written feedback and an action plan is agreed.

2.29   Developmental peer observation takes place in a number of the embedded colleges. The review team noted this as a strength, particularly in the case of UCLan FoC where cross-observation between subject specialists and English tutors, supported by local reporting pro-forma, provides valuable staff development in terms of teaching international students.

2.30   While there is clearly a certain amount of staff development and particular effort is made to engage sessional staff, there is also variability between embedded colleges and little formal structure or expectation. The review team noted that a component of the FoC learning, teaching and assessment strategy is to 'ensure that all staff undertake initial professional training and engage in professional training throughout their careers'. To achieve this it is **desirable** that FoC develop and implement a structured staff development policy for all staff.

How effectively does FoundationCampus ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes?

2.31   Contracts with the universities specify access to university facilities including libraries and computing facilities. In some cases, access to science laboratories is also available. However, the review team noted student concern that there had been issues with laboratory access at two embedded colleges. The team was informed that this was a result of late booking and failure to note increasing class size, which would have made renting laboratory space cost effective. The team considers it **advisable** that FoC ensure that appropriate laboratory experience is available to its students, even when numbers are small.

> The review team has **confidence** that the provider is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the learning opportunities it provides for students through embedded colleges.

3   Public information

How effectively does FoundationCampus' public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides?

3.1   Information is available to prospective students via printed literature and a website. In addition, advice is available from the company's overseas agents. Prior to departure from their home countries to the UK, students also receive detailed emails, varying slightly between the embedded colleges, explaining the UK immigration procedure and advising on travel to the college, initial financial requirements, weather and so on. Students informed the review team that they found the information clear and useful. However, as noted in paragraph 2.24, information about specific higher grades required for progression to certain university programmes and the capping of numbers on some programmes was not presented clearly to students prior to their arrival in the UK.

How effective are FoundationCampus' arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?

3.2   The FoC central marketing department has responsibility for issuing public information such as the different prospectuses and for maintaining the accuracy of the website.

The team concludes that reliance **can** be placed on the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers through embedded colleges.

Action plan[3]

CEG UFP Ltd: FoundationCampus action plan relating to Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight of December 2013						
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 team identified the following areas of **good practice** that are worthy of wider dissemination within FoC:						
• the contribution of subject leaders and subject groups to programme delivery and assessment (paragraphs 1.6, 1.9, 1.14 and 1.20)	Further develop subject leader role to ensure continued contribution to enhancement of curriculum throughout FoC	Introduce conference for subject leaders for them to share good practice Provide subject leaders with access to key online journal subscriptions to support development of the curriculum	Sept 2014	Chief Academic Officer, Chief Administrative Officer	Academic Board	External examiner reports detail satisfaction with curriculum and outcomes, students report satisfaction with curriculum, university partners report students are properly prepared for study
• the well-structured student support delivered through a	Ensure the structure of student support is maintained throughout FoC	Revised learning, teaching and assessment strategy (LTAS) to include specific section on personal tutoring, to ensure	April 2014	Chief Academic Officer, centre heads	Academic Board	Revised LTAS includes section on personal tutoring, students surveyed report

[3] CEG 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, in conjunction with the partner higher education institution.

regular programme of structured personal tutorials (paragraph 2.21)		enhancement where required				satisfaction with personal tutorial arrangements and support
• the effective communication with, and integration of, sessional staff (paragraph 2.27)	Continue to maintain effective integration and communication with sessional staff	Use the new virtual learning environment (VLE) to enhance communication channels with sessional staff	Dec 2014	Chief Academic Officer, VLE working party	Academic Board	Sessional staff report satisfaction with communication and integration (survey report)
Advisable	**Intended outcomes**	**Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes**	**Target date(s)**	**Action by**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation (process or evidence)**
The team considers that it is **advisable** for FoC to:						
• secure greater awareness and detailed implementation of its Quality Assurance Manual across all embedded colleges (paragraph 1.11)	Greater awareness and detailed implementation of the Quality Assurance Manual is achieved	Repurpose Quality Assurance Manual to reflect Quality Code Expectations Undertake targeted staff development sessions at each centre to ensure awareness of the Manual is achieved Ensure consideration of the Manual (and thus the	Repurposed Quality Assurance Manual considered by Academic Board in June 2014 Staff development events delivered	Chief Academic Officer	Academic Board	Quality Assurance Manual reviewed on annual basis to ensure adherence to Quality Code is maintained and enhanced where required Staff surveyed following staff

		Expectations) is included in committee work throughout FoC Develop training module on Quality Assurance Manual via VLE for staff development	before start of academic year 2014-15 Staff training module developed for delivery in Dec 2014			development sessions to ensure understanding of Manual and its application
• expedite the implementation of periodic programme review (paragraph 1.16)	Ensure UFP is subject to programme review and is carried out according to the expectations of the QA Manual	UFP stage 1 (centre head, marketing, sales involvement) carried out via 2-day event, and evidence captured Former UFP students interviewed/surveyed (as appropriate) to capture their views Revised programme specification and SED drawn up (as per QA Manual regulations) and submitted to university partners for final approval and sign off Revised and reviewed UFP runs from 2015-16	UFP review completed by Sept 2014	Chief Academic Officer, centre heads, MD FoC	Academic Board	Revised programme specification produced ready for delivery in 2015-16 academic year Programme is then reviewed via standard means (included in Quality Assurance Manual regulations)
• put in place procedures that prevent the recruitment of students	Ensure no new centre recruits students before a comprehensive written and legally binding agreement or contract is	New centre must have a signed contract/agreement in place before the recruitment cycle starts Academic Board to have	End Feb 2014	Chief Academic Officer, MD FoC	Academic Board	Review process for the contracting of new centres annually

before a comprehensive written and legally binding agreement or contract is in place (paragraph 2.1)	in place	formal oversight of any new centre contracts and formally sign off approval for the recruitment of students				Report to Academic Board annually
• extend and enhance the effectiveness of its system of student representation (paragraph 2.12)	An enhanced and extended student representation system is embedded throughout FoC	Revised student representation system developed, to include identified person within each centre to lead on student engagement, enhanced surveying/focus group activity, enhanced representation training	Dec 2014	Chief Academic Officer, Student Recruitment and Support officers, centre heads	Academic Board	Student representation policy and system reviewed annually by Academic Board Students report greater satisfaction with student engagement via standard surveys/reporting mechanisms
• remove any ambiguities arising from its public information and student acceptance letters (paragraph 2.24)	Student acceptance letters and associated public information have ambiguities removed, and information is therefore clear for students	Admissions to remove ambiguities from acceptance letters Prospectuses and website to be enhanced to ensure wording of admission requirements is clear Sales staff, agents, tutors and centre staff to receive specific guidance and	April 2014 Sept 2014 Sept 2014	Director of Admissions Marketing Manager Marketing Manager, centre heads	Academic Board	Acceptance letters reviewed and approved by Academic Board annually Students report improved clarity of information about specific programmes subject to

		training on advising students on capped courses as to the nature of the requirements for entry to their programme				restricted entry
Desirable	**Intended outcomes**	**Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes**	**Target date/s**	**Action by**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation (process or evidence)**
The team considers that it would be **desirable** for FoC to:						
• expedite an enhanced and more consistent academic interaction with its higher education partners (paragraph 1.5)	A more consistent academic interaction with the university partners is integrated within the academic life of FoC	Identify key university partner staff to send annual monitoring reports (AMRs), and liaise with them on an academic basis Investigate possibility of introducing link tutor role with university partners Produce university partner engagement strategy	April 2014 Sept 2014 Dec 2014	Chief Academic Officer, centre heads	Academic Board	Strategy for consistent university partner engagement is reviewed annually Progression data and AMRs demonstrate greater university partner engagement
• institute greater academic oversight of the individual embedded colleges (paragraph 1.15)	Enhanced academic oversight of individual centres is introduced	Enhance the AMRs to ensure centre-specific data and outcomes are reviewed Enhance monthly business unit meetings to ensure key performance indicators relating to academic oversight from	Sept 2014	Chief Academic Officer, Chief Administra-tive Officer, MD FoC	Academic Board	AMRs are reviewed annually by programme committees and Academic Board Business unit meeting minutes demonstrate

		each centre are considered and actioned				greater academic oversight of individual centres
• continue to explore opportunities to obtain statistical information from its higher education partners (paragraph 1.35)	Relating to the development of a university partner engagement strategy, ensure the strategy contains specific reference to ensuring partners provide FoC with statistical information on student progression and achievement	Produce a university partner strategy that includes specific reference to student statistical information Statistical information on progression is included in AMRs	Dec 2014	Chief Academic Officer	Academic Board	AMRs consider statistical information produced by university partners and any issues arising from this are followed up by the AMR action plan annually Statistics demonstrate greater partner engagement, and curriculum enhanced where evidence demonstrates enhancement is required
• develop and implement a structured staff development policy for all staff (paragraph 2.30)	Structured staff development policy is developed and implemented across FoC	Structured staff development policy produced, to include staff journey (interview, induction, ongoing training needs, exit) Policy rolled out across FoC	Aug 2014	CEG Director of HR, Chief Academic Officer	Academic Board	Policy is reviewed annually and updated where required Staff surveyed report satisfaction with staff

						development
• Sunderland FoC						
• the joint marketing initiatives between SFoC and its University partner (paragraph 22)	Continue to enhance the joint marketing initiatives and evaluate performance, and consider using good practice across FoC	Evidence of joint marketing initiatives formally captured and evaluated to ensure initiatives are having a positive impact on student recruitment	Dec 2014	Centre Head SFoC	Academic Board	Report to Academic Board annually about marketing initiatives to share good practice across FoC Student recruitment data demonstrates enhancements
• take early action to rectify shortcomings in the availability of appropriate laboratory facilities to support student learning (paragraph 10)	Laboratory facilities secured at the start of each academic year for each cohort intake	Laboratory facilities are demonstrated to be secured for the whole academic year via report to Academic Board before the start of the academic year Process built into QA Manual to ensure consistency of practice across FoC	Sept 2014	Centre Head, SFoC Chief Academic Officer	Academic Board	Students report greater satisfaction with laboratory availability
• revise the ways in which it communicates information to potential students about additional	Student acceptance letters and associated public information have ambiguities removed, and information is therefore clear for students	Admissions to remove ambiguities from acceptance letters Prospectuses and website to be enhanced to ensure wording of admission	April 2014 Sept 2014	Director of Admissions Marketing Manager	Academic Board	Acceptance letters reviewed and approved by Academic Board annually

progression requirements and limitations on its MPharm programme pathway (paragraph 29)		requirements is clear

Sales staff, agents, tutors and centre staff to receive specific guidance and training on advising students on capped courses as to the nature of the requirements for entry to their programme | Sept 2014 | Marketing Manager, centre heads | | Students report improved clarity of information about specific programmes subject to restricted entry |
| • UCLan FoC | | | | | | |
| • the social and cultural enrichment programme (paragraph 20) | Continue to enhance the social and cultural enrichment programme and evaluate performance, and consider using good practice across FoC | Evidence of social and cultural enrichment programme formally captured and evaluated to ensure initiatives are having a positive impact on student experience | Dec 2014 | Centre Head UCLan FoC | Academic Board | Report to Academic Board annually about social and cultural programmes to share good practice across FoC

Student survey data demonstrates enhancements |
| • revise the ways in which it communicates information to potential students about additional progression | Student acceptance letters and associated public information have ambiguities removed, and information is therefore clear for students | Admissions to remove ambiguities from acceptance letters

Prospectuses and website to be enhanced to ensure wording of admission requirements is clear | April 2014

Sept 2014 | Director of Admissions

Marketing Manager | Academic Board | Acceptance letters reviewed and approved by Academic Board annually |

requirements and limitations on its BSc Physiotherapy programme pathway (paragraph 28)		Sales staff, agents, tutors and centre staff to receive specific guidance and training on advising students on capped courses as to the nature of the requirements for entry to their programme	Sept 2014	Marketing Manager, centre heads		Students report improved clarity of information about specific programmes subject to restricted entry
• Coventry FoC						
• the work of the pathway leader for pastoral support (paragraph 18)	Continue to enhance the work of the pathway leader for pastoral support and evaluate performance, and consider using role across FoC when centres reach required number of students	Role formally evaluated to ensure it is having a positive impact on student experience	Dec 2014	Centre Head Coventry FoC	Academic Board	Report to Academic Board annually about the role to share good practice across FoC Student survey data demonstrates enhancements
• revise the ways in which it communicates information to potential students about additional progression requirements and limitations on its Architecture	Student acceptance letters and associated public information have ambiguities removed, and information is therefore clear for students	Admissions to remove ambiguities from acceptance letters Prospectuses and website to be enhanced to ensure wording of admission requirements is clear Sales staff, agents, tutors and centre staff to receive specific guidance and	April 2014 Sept 2014 Sept 2014	Director of Admissions Marketing Manager Marketing Manager, centre heads	Academic Board	Acceptance letters reviewed and approved by Academic Board annually Students report improved clarity of information

programme pathway, so that they have accurate and timely information available to them (paragraph 26)		training on advising students on capped courses as to the nature of the requirements for entry to their programme				about specific programmes subject to restricted entry
• Amsterdam FoC						
• the strong working relationship between Amsterdam FoC and the University (paragraphs 3 and 16)	Continue to monitor the strong working relationship and consider evaluation to embed in university partner engagement strategy to use across FoC	Evidence of the strong working relationship formally captured and evaluated to ensure initiatives are having a positive impact on student experience Key learning points embedded in university partner engagement strategy	Dec 2014	Centre Head Amsterdam FoC Chief Academic Officer	Academic Board	Key learning points embedded within university partner engagement strategy Student survey data, AMRs and progression data demonstrate enhancements
• sign a comprehensive, written and legally binding agreement or contract with the University of Amsterdam before any more	Contract signed	Contract signed and received by Academic Board	March 2014	Centre Head Amsterdam FoC, MD FoC, Chief Academic Officer	Academic Board	Review process for contracting new centres annually Report to Academic Board annually

students are admitted (paragraph 19)						

About QAA

QAA is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. QAA's mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

QAA's aims are to:

- meet students' needs and be valued by them
- safeguard standards in an increasingly diverse UK and international context
- drive improvements in UK higher education
- improve public understanding of higher education standards and quality.

QAA conducts reviews of higher education institutions and publishes reports on the findings. QAA also publishes a range of guidance documents to help safeguard standards and improve quality.

More information about the work of QAA is available at: www.qaa.ac.uk.

More detail about Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight can be found at: www.qaa.ac.uk/educational-oversight.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at:
www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary. Formal definitions of key terms can be found in the
Review for Educational Oversight: Handbook.[4]

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 standards**.

awarding body A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA .

awarding organisation An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

designated body An organisation that has been formally appointed or recognised to perform a particular function. QAA has been recognised by UKBA as a designated body for the purpose of providing educational oversight.

differentiated judgements In a Review for Educational Oversight, separate judgements respectively for the provision validated by separate awarding bodies.

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.

external examiner An independent expert appointed by an institution to comment on student achievement in relation to established academic standards and to look at approaches to assessment.

framework for higher education qualifications A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland*.

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.

highly trusted sponsor An organisation that the UK Government trusts to admit migrant students from overseas, according to Tier 4 of the UK Border Agency's points-based immigration system. Higher education providers wishing to obtain this status must undergo a successful review by QAA.

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[4] www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/REO-designated-providers-handbook-13.aspx

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 outcomes 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 that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

programme specifications Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of **programmes** of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

provider (s) (of higher education) Organisations that deliver higher education. In the UK they may be a degree-awarding body or another organisation that offers programmes of higher education on behalf of degree-**awarding bodies** or **awarding organisations**. In the context of Review for Specific Course Designation the term means an independent college.

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

quality See **academic quality**.

Quality Code Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

reference points Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured. Internal reference points may be used by providers for purposes of self-regulation; external ones are used and accepted throughout the higher education community for the checking of standards and quality.

subject benchmark statement A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

threshold academic standards The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks for higher education qualifications** and **subject benchmark statements**. See also **academic standards**.