

Review for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Central College London Ltd, September 2014

Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that the Central College London Ltd (the College) has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the previous [monitoring visit](#) in September 2013.

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 Since the last monitoring visit the College has rebranded under the banner of its holding company, the Huawei Institute. The purpose of rebranding is to emphasise the common purpose of promoting social development in China through collaborative engagement with education, research and media. The College has revised its institutional strategy for 2014-17 following a review and evaluation of its course profile. This has resulted in a change of focus with the decision to close the health and social care programmes accredited by ATHE Ltd, to continue and enhance the business programmes, and to extend its provision in Creative Media Management. The Teesside University BSc (Hons) Business Management (level 6) and MSc International Management programmes exemplify this strategic development.

3 The College courses validated by NCFE are articulated into programmes with its partner Teesside University (the University). NCFE recently announced it would no longer be validating centre-designed programmes and the University is reviewing all its articulation arrangements. The College is currently, therefore, developing its own progression routes for reappraisal of the articulations by the University.

4 There are currently 270 students studying at the College. These are mainly progressing students with the September 2014 intake being small due to UK Visas and Immigration restrictions. Staffing at the College remains stable. Measures have been taken to strengthen the academic delivery profile by the appointment of two senior academics, one as Director of Academic Development, who chairs the Academic Board, and the other as a Director of Research, who oversees research development and supports student dissertations.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

5 The College has made acceptable progress since the 2013 monitoring review. The College works closely and effectively with the University to manage the programmes through site visits and the use of operational partnership manuals. Strengthening of the College's academic leadership and additional senior administrative staff supports development of the new action plan. Closure of the healthcare programmes was implemented using appropriate documented processes.

6 The College revised committee and reporting structures provide a deliberative management framework. The Academic Board has central oversight with direct reporting lines from programme committees, pathway committees and assessment boards. Quality assurance and enhancement are informed by academic networks; the policy review network; and student representative meetings with University staff. The Quality Team has revised its programme approval and design policy to strengthen externality for subsequent programme validation.

7 The committee structure is not yet embedded fully however, and the cycle of annual monitoring was incomplete at the time of the visit. External examiners' reports have been received from the College's own external examiners and from the University-appointed externals for the franchised courses. Staff whom the review team met commented that University external examiners' reports do not enable them to differentiate College student performance from that of University campus-based students or other partners delivering the same courses.

8 Staff and student handbooks have been revised to improve clarity. Policies and procedures are now clearly aligned with those of the University in the programme handbooks. Student admissions are governed by the College admissions procedures, and approved by Teesside University Business School. Students are interviewed when possible and proficiency in English is checked through IELTS qualifications.

9 The College continues to gather and review student feedback and module evaluation annually. The University held a student/staff liaison meeting at their recent visit to the College. Access to learning resources has been improved with the provision of electronic use of the University library. A recent agreement with Senate House Library includes borrowing rights. The College virtual learning environment is being reviewed. Students confirmed that they are well supported by module leaders and staff, with timely and constructive formative feedback. There is an Academic Skills Development module to improve reflective learning and higher level skills, as well as English language support for dissertations.

10 The staff appreciate the new Learning and Teaching Observation process which focuses on peer review and critical dialogue. University module leaders offer additional support and training for College staff.

11 The College has recently standardised its recording of student data. It is aware that further development and use of these statistics will inform module evaluations and programme reports, and ultimately assist in the evaluation of College performance.

12 The College recognises that student success rates in the current year are disappointing. Assessment Boards track module performance and minutes of meetings offer insight into the various factors affecting student achievement. These factors include student attendance and engagement in supervisor sessions. Consequently, the College has improved its student attendance tracking system and is reconfiguring the operation of supervision sessions. A revision of the retake/resit policy and the Academic Misconduct Policy was approved by the Academic Board. Plagiarism-detection software is being introduced.

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

13 The College has made some progress in reviewing its policies and procedures for alignment with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). Fortnightly meetings of the Quality Team include mapping of, for example, Indicators of *Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval*. There is a published schedule of meetings for 2014-15 to review and map engagement with each chapter of the Quality Code. The public information policy has also been revised.

14 The College has responded to suggestions in the recent NCFE IIQ monitoring report and made minor adjustments to internal moderation processes, although the latest report suggests that requirements have not been fully met. However, as noted in paragraph 3, the College is withdrawing from its arrangements with NCFE.

Section 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 Mrs Brenda Hodgkinson (Coordinator) and Dr Liz Briggs (Reviewer) on 1 September 2014.

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