



Specific Course Designation: report of the monitoring visit of Centre for Advanced Studies Ltd, t/a City of London College, July 2018

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 Centre for Advanced Studies t/a City of London College (the College) is making acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the July 2017 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

2 Changes since the last QAA review visit

2 Since December 2016, the College has not enrolled any higher education students nor held a formal agreement with an awarding body. The College has made progress in constructing new premises and has been actively seeking an awarding body. The monitoring visit took place on the ground floor of the College's new premises, which are on a site that was previously occupied by the College.

3 The College employs three senior managers and nine administrative and support staff on permanent contracts equivalent to 11.4 full-time staff. In addition, it employs a range of part-time academic tutors on a temporary basis when required to deliver its programmes of study. The College's senior management team comprises the Chief Executive Officer/Academic Director, the Director of Operations, the Director of Quality and Standards and a senior academic.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

4 This was the first monitoring visit since the last full review in July 2017. The team considered documentation and held meetings with two former students and with three senior managers, two administrators and one tutor. The discussions explored the College's strategic direction, plans for new premises and awarding body, plus the changes made to satisfy the five recommendations from the review. In the absence of an awarding body and students, the College was unable to show its practical implementation of the planned changes. Hence the review team focused on how the College had revised and evaluated its processes, procedures and structures which, when implemented effectively, had the potential to satisfy the five recommendations.

5 The College has made acceptable progress and taken suitable action to meet all five recommendations from the previous review. The College's senior management team has systematically evaluated and documented its progress in completing the required actions at regular senior management meetings. The College has acceptable arrangements in place for the admission of any future students and annual monitoring of future programmes. The College has made acceptable progress in engaging with relevant external reference points including the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) guidelines on governance. The College plans to align its revised processes and procedures with the requirements of a future awarding body, before producing an updated version of its Quality Handbook. The overall outcome has been informed by the following findings.

6 The College has introduced a framework for externality to show how it will increase its use of external and independent expertise at key stages of maintaining academic standards. The framework describes how College staff are required to engage with external examiners and advisers to ensure that academic standards are effectively maintained. A curriculum planning and development committee will maintain oversight of the ways in which external advice is used. The team heard that the College's enhancement strategy requires staff engagement with external advisers and examiners to enhance their continuing professional development. It has devised an externality mapping matrix to demonstrate its continuing use of externality to meet relevant expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code). The College has approved development of a new employer forum to provide professional and academic expertise to inform the currency of future curricula. The terms of reference for the College's newly constituted teaching and learning forum also provide for external membership and staff development sessions from external contributors. The College has incorporated the developments in its use of externality into its strategic enhancement plan. The plan describes how the College aims to enhance learning, teaching and the currency of the curriculum to meet employers' needs for graduates and promote graduates' employability.

7 The College has established a new recruitment, admissions and selection policy, and a revised information policy. By following both policies the College can ensure that policies and procedures for recruitment, selection and admission of students are made fully accessible to staff and students. The information policy governs the process to ensure that information for applicants on the College's website can be reviewed, updated and authorised by the Academic Director. The College has also developed a new recruitment strategy outlining how it will strengthen future recruitment and widen participation from underrepresented groups in the UK. The approach includes building relationships with feeder institutions and monitoring staff and student engagement with its recruitment processes.

8 The College has made acceptable progress towards ensuring that student representatives are fully supported to undertake their role as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience. The College has devised a new development programme for student representatives and an excellence award scheme to incentivise them. Both developments have the potential to improve student engagement in their learning experience.

9 The College has made acceptable progress towards ensuring that all information available to students and staff, about the timescales for return of assessed work with feedback, is accurate and consistent. The College has developed a new teaching and learning policy which specifies the agreed timescale for return of assessed work with feedback. The College's staff met to consider the optimum timescale for return of assessed work with feedback. The meeting resolved that the optimum timescale should remain set at four weeks. A clear statement about the timescale for the return of assessed work with feedback has been inserted into the updated Student Handbook. The College outlined its plans to provide the information for staff on return of assessed work with feedback in the Quality Handbook when this is updated. The College is planning staff development on the quality of assessment feedback to students for its annual quality enhancement conference in July 2018. Alumni confirmed that they had received timely and helpful written and verbal feedback on assessed work.

10 The College has made considerable progress to further develop formal policies and procedures to ensure that information produced for students is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. A new information policy has been produced and the College is currently reviewing its quality handbook and student handbooks to ensure the fitness for purpose, accessibility and trustworthiness of information for students.

11 The College has effective arrangements for the recruitment and admission of students which align well with the Quality Code. Information for applicants on admissions policies and procedures is readily accessible on the College's website. The recruitment strategy is appropriate and allows for fair and transparent admission of students. The admissions procedures are effective and include an interview policy and arrangements to ensure that students are proficient in their use of English. The College checks applicants' level of English competence and, for non-native speakers, requires an IELTS score of 6.0 for undergraduate study and 6.5 for postgraduate study. The College checks certificates of academic qualifications and, if necessary, uses the UK NARIC service to establish the equivalence of qualifications from other countries to ensure they meet the entry level standard required. The College has effective arrangements for the recognition of prior learning. The level of commitment to study is judged through questions on the application form, referees comments and at interview. International alumni confirmed the College's use of interviews to assess authenticity of intention to study and appropriateness for the programme. The College offers further English language and study skills support to enrolled students at no additional cost.

12 The College has thorough arrangements for the monitoring and review of its programmes which are normally directed by an awarding body. The monitoring process is overseen by the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC) - a sub-committee of the Academic Board. The Academic Board, reporting to the Board of Governors, has responsibility for ensuring that academic standards are maintained and that quality is enhanced. Programme teams complete a self-assessment report which considers qualitative and quantitative information on programme performance. The programme template requires critical commentary and evaluation of student retention, progression and achievement at module level and is informed by student feedback. An overarching College self-assessment report incorporates findings from programme self-assessment to evaluate programme delivery and management. This is considered by the Quality Enhancement Committee which includes staff and student representatives. In this way, former students have encountered reports from external examiners, which are also made available to all students through a virtual learning environment.

13 The College has not enrolled any higher education students since December 2016. At that time, 32 students had completed a Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma in Business with a pass rate of 100 percent. Simultaneously six students completed a Pearson BTEC Higher National Diploma in Hospitality Management with a 66 per cent pass rate.

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

14 The College is making acceptable progress in using external reference points including the Quality Code. The College has given further detailed attention to reviewing individual policies and procedures in relation to the Quality Code and elements of the Office for Students' Regulatory Framework. The student engagement policy has been updated and is included in the strategic enhancement plan. The College is proactive in engaging its students as partners in quality assurance through module evaluations and questionnaires in addition to holding staff-student liaison committee meetings each semester leading to improvements. Students are invited to participate in development activities and attend the annual quality enhancement conference. The College has recently revised the terms of reference for committees with a view to ensuring that its governance arrangements align with the Higher Education Code of Governance of the Committee of University Chairs.

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 Elizabeth Briggs, Reviewer, and Dr Anne Miller, Coordinator, on 4 July 2018.

QAA2221 - R9936 - Aug 18

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