

Specific Course Designation: report of the monitoring visit of the Centre for Advanced Studies Ltd, t/a City of London College, July 2019

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 2018 [monitoring visit](#).

Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 The College continues to be an approved delivery centre of BTEC Higher National programmes leading to Pearson awards at Levels 4 and 5 in Business, Engineering, Education and Training, and Computing, and at Level 7 in Management. The College has recently transferred the programmes to Pearson's Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). However, there has been no student recruitment for the last two years.

3 There were no changes in senior management staff. Strategic infrastructure developments to enhance information technology and improvements to the new campus building have been progressed in preparation for a new cycle of higher education student recruitment in September 2019.

Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The College continues to make acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision although the current visit was conducted within the same constraints as last year, with the absence of students making it challenging to test the effectiveness of most of the actions, revised policies and procedures. However, the documentation provided would enable the College to ensure the maintenance of academic standards and enhance the student experience.

5 The framework for externality is designed to ensure that appropriate input of independent and external expertise informs all stages of maintaining academic standards (paragraph 6). In line with its Widening Participation Policy, the College has developed a new recruitment strategy based on relationship marketing with institutions that have potential applicants from non-traditional backgrounds (paragraph 11). The student representative development programme, together with an excellence award scheme to incentivise student participation, has the potential to promote and enhance student engagement (paragraph 7). Information about the timescales for the return of assessed work with feedback is now accurate and consistent, and clearly articulated (paragraph 8). The College has reviewed and implemented its Information Policy to ensure that the information produced for students is fit-for-purpose, accessible and trustworthy (paragraph 9). The College is taking further steps to implement its strategic quality framework in a top-down evaluation and review of governance structures (paragraph 10).

6 The College is continuing to develop its external mapping matrix, aligned with the revised Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), to meet the requirements for externality. The new employer forum and a database for external academic and professional contacts have the potential to ensure that programme content remains relevant and supports student employability. The College has developed working relationships with Beacon-status colleges of further education, and will be using a network of local employers to provide student placement opportunities.

7 In the absence of students, both the student representative development programme and the excellence award scheme to incentivise student participation have yet to be implemented. Both have the potential to promote and enhance student engagement. Information for students about representation is available in updated student handbooks, at induction and on the virtual learning platform.

8 Information available to students and staff about the timescales for return of assessed work with feedback is accurate and consistent, and clearly articulated in the Quality Handbook and in student handbooks. This year's annual quality enhancement conference will include a presentation and discussion of case studies on writing evaluative and effective feedback for students.

9 The College has reviewed and implemented its Information Policy. All published information is reviewed and monitored periodically by the senior management team, with final sign-off by the Academic Director.

10 The new governing body, including a senior university academic, will provide strengthened strategic oversight of the Academic Board in its guidance to enhance the College provision. The senior management team has taken the advice of the academic governor to improve the governance procedures and to continue to develop the Strategic Enhancement Plan.

11 The College has made recruitment, selection and admissions policies available and easily accessible on its website. They are clear and transparent, and aligned with the revised Quality Code but are untested at present. The College's recruitment strategy will be based on working closely with institutions in the local area that can provide potential applicants from non-traditional backgrounds. The College's commitment to widening participation also includes ensuring a fair and inclusive selection process. Information for applicants is easy to access on the College website. Applicants are considered on the basis of prior qualifications, work experience, adjudication of non-standard qualifications, a written statement and individual merit, supported by effective arrangements for the recognition of prior learning. The College has clear English language competence requirements of IELTS scores of 5.5 for undergraduate programmes and 6.0 for postgraduate study. UK NARIC checks are undertaken on non-UK qualifications and certificates. The College will monitor attendance to ensure that students are committed to their programmes of study.

12 The College's Learning and Teaching Policy, together with information available to staff and students on the timescales for the return of assessed work with feedback, will support students in understanding the extent of their achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Recognition of prior learning is embedded in the policies and procedures for student admissions. Staff will receive induction in the assessments for RQF modules as necessary before course delivery. The policies and procedures for student assessment, moderation, external examining, annual monitoring and periodic review are clearly articulated in the Quality Handbook and in student handbooks. In the absence of student assessment for the past two academic years, it is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the current assessment regime.

13 The College has no student performance data to report for 2017-18 or 2018-19.

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

14 The College continues to make acceptable progress in its use of the revised Quality Code, including reviewing and updating policies and procedures. The College's reflective practitioner staff development programme responds effectively to *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications* (FHEQ) with consideration of level descriptors. Subject Benchmark Statements are used to inform curriculum development and programme modifications.

Report on a Concerns Scheme investigation

15 In response to the Concerns Scheme report published on 21 June 2019, the College has developed an action plan which addresses the three recommendations made in the report. With regard to the recommendation to ensure that the status of programmes as defined on the Certificate of Authorisation is made clear to students and other stakeholders through information published by London American City College (LAAC) and its sister organisations, the College agreed with LAAC Directors that LAAC will seek sign-off from the College prior to any publication of information concerning the awards. The effectiveness of the process will be reviewed annually by both parties. To ensure that certificates and transcripts are worded in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for qualifications made by UK awarding bodies/organisations and only refer to CLC accreditations that are current, the College has revised both documents. Certificates now state that they are College certificates and are issued in the UK. In response to the recommendation to ensure that transcripts state the location of study and clarify the nature of the credit framework the credits refer to, the College revised its transcripts' template. Transcripts now clearly state the location of study and indicate the grading framework. However, the credit framework used to translate grades into credits earned remains unclear.

Background to the monitoring visit

16 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.

17 The monitoring visit was carried out by Dr Elizabeth Briggs, Reviewer, and Dr Monika Ruthe, QAA Officer, on 2 July 2019.

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