



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Christie's Education Ltd, October 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 Christie's Education Ltd (Christie's) is making acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the November 2016 [monitoring visit](#).

2 Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 2017-18 was CE's final year of validation partnership with the University of Glasgow. The 2016-17 cohort of students on the four Glasgow-validated MLitt programmes completed their studies in December 2017, while Year 2 students on the undergraduate MA (Hons) completed their studies in June 2018, thereafter transferring to Glasgow for Years 3 and 4. In September 2017, 37 new MSc students joined the new Open University-validated MSc programme. 2018-19 will be the first year in which Christie's will be solely validated by The Open University. A new programme (MA Art History and Art World Practice) has been validated by The Open University and will commence in September 2019.

3 Following the closure of the programmes in 2017-18, the number of academic staff has reduced from 13 in 2016-17 to eight and the student headcount has reduced from 105 in 2016-17 (all programmes) to 37 (MSc Art, Law and Business). In July 2018 Christie's relocated to its new site at 42 Portland Place, London W1B 1NB.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

4 Christie's has taken forward their action plan and demonstrated how the redesign of their committee structure now provides more direct oversight of quality and standards. Similarly, their approach to professional staff development and the resources and financial support available to staff to take up opportunities is having a positive impact on admissions practice, student support, curriculum development and teaching and learning. Wider and more comprehensive policies, procedures and practice have been developed around assessment including greater support for staff and students regarding academic writing, avoidance of academic malpractice and easier plagiarism detection. The review team therefore concludes that Christie's has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision since the November 2016 monitoring visit.

5 Christie's annual monitoring processes continue to become more firmly embedded, despite the closure of some programmes. Annual monitoring reports and their associated action plans detail progress and developments. Action plans are comprehensive and robust, with clear headings and appropriate actions, including defined milestones for success. Christie's reviewed their committee structure in light of the reduction of programmes in their provision. Following the reductions, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee has been disbanded, with its remit directly taken up by the Academic Board. This Board has direct oversight and engagement in the quality assurance and enhancement of their programmes. Programme committees now report directly to the Academic Board giving

clearer line of sight regarding programme organisation and management, resources, recruitment and admissions and programme marketing. As part of ongoing quality assurance processes, Christie's continues to work well with their validating partner and report progress on actions to the Academic Board.

6 Christie's has a range of initiatives to provide vocational context of learning and assessment enabled by the professional profile of staff. The Learning, Teaching and Research Strategy has three strategic priorities, one of which includes the enhancement of continuing professional development of its staff as a way of strengthening academic practice. Academic and professional support staff are equally encouraged and well funded to professionally update themselves, with some academic staff currently also progressing Fellowship applications with the Higher Education Academy. A member of the support team is also carrying out a postgraduate qualification in Library and Information Studies. Teaching staff also have access to two weeks' study leave to enable them to carry out scholarly activity.

7 The employability of Christie's remains a key strength for the institution and is the focus for continued development. In 2017-18 their professional development programme continued to expand and develop, with students able to access a varied range of insights from art world industry professionals through panel discussions, networking skills workshops, a 'speed-meeting' style of careers night, plus off-site visits to art world employers. Also, members of the Art World Professional Advisory Group participated in the development of the new MA in Art History and Art World Practice and have taken part in the career development programme. They also continue to work collaboratively with their parent company's human resources team to provide MSc and MA students with a maximum twelve-week work placement in a relevant department. Students commented favourably on their work placement experience; however, they expressed concern that communication regarding the length placement and selection process was often unclear and inconsistent. Christie's is actively responding to these concerns and have updated their associated work-placement policy and procedure.

8 Students are broadly positive about their experience at Christie's and feel that the informal mechanisms in place for staff and students to engage on a daily basis is effective in bringing about change. However, some students were unclear of the formal mechanisms in place to support the student voice. The majority of students were unaware of the Student Staff Forum, Programme Committee and Academic Board and the role students play in them. Student representatives have not been appointed, although the election process is underway.

9 Christie's Recruitment and Admissions Policy and associated procedures and user-friendly admissions flow chart, clearly outline the scope, responsibilities and expectations of admission processes for applicants and staff. The policy and procedure has been aligned to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code): *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education* and cover principles of transparency, assessment criteria, mechanisms for removing barriers for applicants and the conduct of their admissions process being carried out in a fair professional manner. The procedure also details offer conditions and how to access information regarding complaints and appeals policies and processes. The policy also confirms that a review of policy and practice is carried out as part of the recruitment and admissions teams annual monitoring and review. The associated action plan is monitored by the Senior Management Team who has oversight of policy and procedure. Christie's has all the necessary and appropriate English testing in place and complies with the UKVI.

10 Students confirmed that the admissions process was clear and effective and that they knew what was expected of them as part of the selection process. Some commented

that they received their offer of a place in as little as 24 hours after application, but for others the process took much longer. Christie's explained that offers are only made once all the selection information is received and that students are advised of the outcome within the designated timescales identified in the policy.

11 Christie's has a range of policies and procedures in place to support effective assessment practice, aligned with the Quality Code, *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*. They have adapted their Assessment Regulations to ensure they meet the requirements of their validating university and are reflected correctly in programme specifications. Christie's continues to develop their programmes with a range of assessments that support students in achieving programme learning outcomes. These are demonstrated in the current MSc and the new MA Art History and Art World Practice in associated programme specifications. Students said that staff respond well to queries regarding assessment practice and that when they raised concerns over workload and timelines they were provided with appropriate help and support.

12 Plagiarism-detection software and a student signed originality declaration are two ways in which Christie's have been working to minimise plagiarism and increase the detectability of academic cheating, which had been a concern for them in the past. During induction students are given extensive and mandatory sessions on academic writing and the importance of safeguarding against plagiarism. The majority of students found these sessions helpful, especially mature students who had been out of education for some time.

13 Students are aware of the role of the external examiner and associated university link tutors who monitor the quality of their programmes and assessment practice. External examiner reports detail that assessment and feedback practice meet national standards.

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

14 Christie's has systematically mapped the Quality Code to their policies and procedures. Through their work with new validating partners Christie's ensures that their programmes are externally benchmarked. They also have external members on their Academic Board, to ensure this key committee receives and hears from experts outside of CE. Additionally, their comprehensive continuing professional development programme provides many opportunities for academic and professional support staff to engage with external organisations and take part in regional, national and international events and conferences that enrich the experience for students by informing teaching practice and research. Indeed, students recognised that the quality of teaching they receive is exemplary due in some part to the breadth and wealth of external engagement their teachers are involved in.

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 Mr Mark Cooper, Reviewer, and Dr Yue Song, QAA Officer, on 25 October 2018.

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