



CEG UFP Ltd

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

November 2014

Annex 1: Coventry Foundation Campus

Introduction and background

The Cooperation Agreement with Coventry University (the University) dates from April 2008. Coventry Foundation Campus (Coventry FoC) was one of the three original members of the CEG UFP Ltd network and has its base on the main campus of the University.

Coventry FoC offers the International Foundation Programme (IFP), the International Diploma Programme (IDP) and the Master's Qualifying Programme (MQP). Current student numbers are 337 students on the IFP, 54 on the IDP and 182 on the MQP.

Coventry FoC operates within the centrally administered framework, notably CEG UFP Ltd's Academic Quality Assurance Manual. The head of Coventry FoC is a member of the CEG UFP Ltd Academic Board. The University partner has no involvement in the committee structure of Coventry FoC and has not received the annual monitoring review, although will do so from 2014. The University is not involved in the oversight of academic standards. CEG UFP's review of Coventry FoC is as a business rather than an academic process although targets are set for student progression and attendance.

The self-evaluation document was written by Coventry FoC alone, although it was seen by the University. There was no student submission because the students only joined Coventry FoC on 26 September 2014.

Key findings

Academic standards

There can be **confidence** that academic standards at the embedded college are managed appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of CEG UFP Ltd.

Quality of learning opportunities

There can be **confidence** that the quality of learning opportunities at the embedded college is assured and enhanced appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of CEG UFP Ltd.

Information about learning opportunities

Reliance can be placed on the information that the embedded college produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

The review team noted the following **good practice** across CEG UFP Ltd:

- the quality of information and guidance made available to prospective students (paragraph 31).

Recommendations

The review makes the following recommendations.

It is **advisable** for Coventry FoC to:

- make structured and systematic use of student performance and progression data at provider and college levels (paragraph 10)
- modify programme specifications to accurately describe the recognition of the programmes for progression purposes (paragraph 41).

The teams agreed one area where it would be **desirable** for CEG UFP Ltd to take action:

- to consider the possibility of certifying students' achievement of learning outcomes (paragraph 2).

Detailed findings

How effectively do CEG UFP Ltd and Coventry FoundationCampus fulfil responsibilities for the management of academic standards at this College?

1 CEG UFP Ltd sets the framework through which academic standards are managed, notably through the revised FoundationCampus Academic Quality Assurance Manual (September 2014) with oversight provided by Academic Board. CEG UFP Ltd's annual Academic Review methodology is based on a report completed by the Chief Academic Officer. While this contains statistical information about the performance of students in each centre, there is no detailed consideration of Coventry FoC's students. Nor is there currently any formal process of academic review of the provision. CEG UFP Ltd does have a system of external examiners who moderate academic standards across the network and provide external examiner reports. It is planned for the University to receive a copy of the annual Academic Review Report for 2013-14 this year, and the University acknowledges that it should have more involvement in monitoring standards. There has been increased and improved communication with the University since the last review visit.

2 At the last review, Coventry FoC was in the process of transferring accreditation of its MFP programme to Pearson, which would also give students the benefit of BTEC certification of their learning, while retaining accreditation by NCFE of its UFP programme. Since then, Coventry FoC has taken the decision to withdraw from external accreditation of its programmes, and to rely solely on its progression agreement with the University. The review team was advised that notice of withdrawal had not yet been served on Pearson although CEG UFP Ltd had stopped registering students with them. The NCFE accreditation will terminate in December 2014. CEG UFP Ltd is seeking to have amended agreements signed with its partner universities before giving formal notice of withdrawal. It would be **desirable** for CEG UFP Ltd to consider the possibility of certifying students' achievement of learning outcomes.

How effective is the management of student assessment?

3 The Academic Quality Assurance Manual includes a clear assessment policy including arrangements for assessment setting, marking, moderation and standardisation. Students at Coventry FoC undertake the standard set of assessments which apply to all CEG UFP Ltd's centres. For academic subjects, assessments are set by subject leaders and approved by the relevant external examiner. In English, assessments are specific to the centre, although there is consultation about them between English teachers across the network.

4 Students are provided with a range of assessment experiences designed to ensure they are prepared for the transition to a university programme. Students indicated that assessment requirements are generally clearly communicated and they understood what was required. Feedback on assessed work is timely and generally helpful, although there was some variation.

5 The Student Programme Handbook (2014-15) makes clear that students must submit assessments by published deadlines, although there is provision for extensions. There are arrangements in place to ensure that students are aware of regulations about academic malpractice.

Where appropriate, how effectively are UK external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

6 The revised Academic Quality Assurance Manual is the key means by which the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) and other external reference points are incorporated in CEG UFP Ltd's policy and processes. Staff demonstrated an awareness of external reference points. There have been training sessions on the use of the manual across the centres.

How effectively are external examining, moderation, or verification used to assure academic standards?

7 CEG UFP Ltd currently has a team of four external examiners appointed from higher education institutions. These cover all the individual centres. External examiner reports go to the Chief Academic Officer and then to Academic Board. Issues specific to Coventry FoC are notified directly. The Head of Centre is a member of the central Assessment Board, and as a consequence has access to verbal comments made by the external examiners. External examiner reports are available to all staff through the network intranet and the annual Academic Review Report. Staff were able to give examples of changes introduced to assessment practice with group work as a result of external examiner comment. The students are aware of external examiners' reports although they had not seen any of them.

8 The Academic Quality Assurance Manual specifies a process for internal moderation of assessment. Staff whom the review team met were fully aware of the moderation processes that are used both within Coventry FoC and across all CEG UFP Ltd's centres. External examiners are positive about the moderation and marking processes.

How effectively is statistical information used to monitor and assure academic standards?

9 The self-evaluation document included statistical information on student numbers and progression at Coventry FoC. The same information is incorporated in the Annual Monitoring Reports for all programmes in the centres. The statistics and the Annual

Monitoring Reports indicate how many students withdrew, completed, passed and failed, but do not indicate how many had progressed to Coventry University programmes. The review team was provided with this information when it was requested.

10 In the review conducted last year it was noted that Coventry FoC had limited information on the performance of its alumni as they progress through their University programmes. The University staff the review team met acknowledged that it would be useful to both Coventry FoC and the University to have this information, although there were difficulties in obtaining it through the University's student record system. It is **advisable** that CEG UFP Ltd makes structured and systematic use of student performance and progression data at provider and embedded college levels.

How effectively are responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities fulfilled?

11 Within the context of increased student numbers in 2013-14, which are matched by a similar projected level of recruitment in 2014-15, the new role of Head of Learning and Teaching has recently been established at Coventry FoC. An existing member of CEG UFP Ltd staff has been appointed to the post. The new role is focused on oversight of the quality of provision, and includes the line management of pathway leaders. While it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the role, its creation demonstrates a considered and proactive approach to the management and enhancement of learning opportunities.

12 Under the agreement with the University, Coventry FoC is committed to providing the resources required for teaching, learning and supporting students. The University has responsibility for providing resources, including library access, information technology and university student support services.

13 Overall, through its systems of academic and personal support for students described in the following sections of this report, and the operation of its subject teams and personal tutor arrangements, Coventry FoC fulfils effectively its responsibilities for maintaining and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities.

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

14 The Academic Quality Assurance Manual includes information on external reference points, including the Quality Code. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is used across Foundation Campuses to benchmark their English provision. Schemes of work and assessments are aligned with the Framework in order to ensure modules are matched to the pace of learning and expectations of the English language capabilities of students.

15 At the current review, it was clear that staff were aware of the Academic Quality Assurance Manual, which is now available to them online and in hard copy. They indicated that this document incorporates external reference points, notably the Quality Code, and that their engagement with it operates through the application of the principles and procedures set out in the Manual. Teaching staff offered the use of the Manual by a subject team to develop assessment practice as an example of the effective use of external reference points in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities.

How effectively do CEG UFP Ltd and Coventry Foundation Campus assure themselves that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

16 Coventry FoC monitors the quality of teaching and learning and its enhancement through informal mentoring of new staff, observation of teaching, staff appraisal, and student module evaluation.

17 New teaching staff receive support through informal mentoring. A formal process of management observation of teaching, which informs the annual staff appraisal process, is in place for all teaching staff. Generally, the review team found that these systems operate effectively, providing Campus oversight to ensure the maintenance and enhancement of teaching and learning. Teaching staff confirmed the benefits of these formal processes to their practice, for example the development of different teaching styles in response to feedback arising from observation and appraisal. Peer observation, which occurs informally within subject teams, is practised enthusiastically by staff and regarded by them as a valuable contributor to the enhancement of teaching and learning

18 However, while most students were content with the teaching they received, a small number of students expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching provided by two particular tutors. They said that they had raised their concerns with teaching and support staff, but felt that the issues had not been addressed. When asked how Coventry FoC handled such issues, senior staff described the strategies that are applied. The matter is taken up by the pathway leader in discussion with the tutor concerned and followed through with mentoring support and, typically, with teaching observation. There had been one recent case in which a tutor in receipt of mentoring support in such circumstances had decided to resign. The review team considers that the strategies described are clear and well understood by senior staff and provided for appropriate and effective action. However, the team was unable to determine whether or not such action had been initiated in response to the specific concerns expressed in its meeting with students.

19 Student module evaluation is also used to provide feedback on the quality of teaching and learning. The review team considers that appropriate and effective arrangements are in place to maintain and enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

How effectively is student feedback used to assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

20 Coventry FoC has clear mechanisms for hearing and responding to the student voice. These mechanisms are understood by students and staff and, overall, they operate effectively to assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities.

21 Student representatives are appointed by invitation following nomination by staff. They are briefed on their role. The system is generally working well. It allows the student voice to be heard through informal communication between student representatives and staff. More formally, student views and concerns are aired in the Student Council, which comprises student representatives and staff and meets at least once per term. The weekly personal tutor sessions provide a further forum for the receipt of student feedback, both from individual students and through student representatives.

22 Students are informed of action taken in response to the student voice, or the reasons why action could not be taken, in 'you said, we did' format posted on Campus notice boards. Examples of actions taken include the introduction of Coventry FoC reading weeks and class rescheduling to reduce noise in an open learning area.

23 Student programme feedback is gathered through termly online module evaluations, which are collated and analysed centrally by CEG UFP Ltd. Evaluation specific to individual Campuses, both positive and negative, is identified and fed back through subject leaders to subject teams and/or individual tutors as appropriate. The system is working as intended and one tutor described his huge personal satisfaction on receiving positive student feedback through this route.

How effectively do CEG UFP Ltd and Coventry Foundation Campus assure themselves that students are supported effectively?

24 Coventry FoC provides extensive academic and personal support for students, from entry through to completion of their programmes. Students confirmed that the induction programme, which includes talks from University staff, gave them a helpful introduction to the Campus, providing key information on a range of academic and other matters. Latecomers are provided with the same information in one-to-one sessions.

25 Tutors monitor students' academic progress and class attendance on a continuous basis. Staff are alerted, through readily accessible electronic student records, to students who have been identified through these processes as being 'at risk'. This system works effectively to highlight to tutors a need, with respect to these students, for increased vigilance and/or additional individual support, as appropriate.

26 Alongside this system, tutors also provide additional academic support to individual students or small groups of students where a need has been identified either by the tutor or by the students themselves. Students whom the review team met who had struggled with aspects of their academic work valued highly the extra support that is offered in these circumstances.

27 Students said that staff are accessible, approachable and helpful. Email is the typical method of communication between students and sessional tutors whenever the latter are not physically present at Coventry FoC. Dedicated support and administrative staff are available on site to help students with general queries and personal matters. Where necessary and appropriate, students are signposted to the University support services to which they have right of access.

28 Every UFP and IDP student has a named personal tutor. Students on the Master's Qualifying Programme are supported by the pathway leader. The personal tutor system operates formally through the weekly programme of personal tutor sessions, which runs throughout the year. Together with the scheduled content, these sessions provide a forum for discussion of individual learning plans and the opportunity for students to raise any worries or concerns.

29 Coventry FoC prepares students for progression to the University and to university study through student visits to faculties, coordinated through the University's International Office, and through the development of independent learning and research skills within the curriculum.

30 It was clear from the meeting with students that they understand, access and value the academic and personal support available to them. There is a high level of academic and personal support for students.

How effectively does Coventry Foundation Campus manage the recruitment and admission of students?

31 Student recruitment and admissions are managed centrally by CEG UFP Ltd, using a clear and detailed admissions process. Many of the students used the services of agents

and all had accessed information about the Centre and the programme online. They were satisfied with the operation of the admissions process; they confirmed that the information they had received pre-entry, including from agents, was helpful and accurate; and they said that there had been good communication with Coventry FoC during the admissions process. The quality of information and guidance made available to prospective students by CEG UFP Ltd is **good practice**. The review team concludes that the recruitment and admission of students is managed effectively.

What are the arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

32 Staff are encouraged to engage with staff development activities. Financial sponsorship is currently being provided to a number of staff members who are pursuing master's qualifications at the University. Senior staff indicated a desire to use strengthening links with the University to secure more extensive access to University staff development provision for Campus staff.

33 Teaching staff offered examples of staff development they had undertaken, such as initial management training at the University; access to and use of CEG UFP Ltd's online training package; and the master's degree study referred to above. The review team also learned of the research and scholarly activity undertaken by some members of staff who had progressed their research through to academic writing, with a view to publication.

34 CEG UFP Ltd has set up a new continuing professional development fund this year and bids for funding from staff across the embedded colleges, including staff at Coventry FoC, have been invited and received. The outcomes of the decision process, to be undertaken by the CEG UFP Ltd Learning and Teaching Committee, are expected shortly. Teaching staff whom the team met were clearly pleased and enthused by this opportunity to develop and submit bids for staff development funding.

How effectively do CEG UFP Ltd and Coventry Foundation Campus ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?

35 Students are generally satisfied with library and IT resources and, in this respect, the accessibility and sufficiency of resources has been well managed within the context of the substantial increase in student numbers in 2013-14 (numbers which are projected to be maintained in 2014-15). Students use and value the learning resources provided to them through the virtual learning environment (VLE).

36 Students voiced less content with the management of the timetable with regard to the timing of classes, some of which run from 6pm to 8pm. This was readily acknowledged as an issue by staff. Staff have ensured that timetabling arrangements will continue to 'share' late sessions across programmes, with larger allocations to pre-master's students where possible. Senior staff indicated that it was unlikely that the problem would be eliminated in the foreseeable future.

37 Despite the difficulties, the review team formed the view that the timetabling situation was not impacting detrimentally on students' ability to achieve the intended learning outcomes and that, overall, the Campus is effectively ensuring that learning resources are sufficient and accessible to students.

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

38 Coventry FoC's public information is available to prospective students and other stakeholders online and in the hard copy prospectus is clear, accurate, extensive and informative.

39 In December 2013, the QAA review team for Coventry FoC considered it advisable for the provider to revise the ways it communicates with potential students about additional progression requirements and limitations on its Architecture programme pathway, so that students have accurate and timely information available to them. This work has been completed and the relevant public information is now clear, accurate and accessible to potential students. At the current review visit, students confirmed this to be the case.

40 Students are provided with a Student Handbook setting out general information covering areas such as enrolment and induction, attendance, visas, student support, student social life and student representatives; and a programme handbook containing comprehensive programme information. The information is clear, well presented and user-friendly. Students were happy with the information they received.

41 The review team concludes that Coventry FoC's information communicates effectively to students and other stakeholders about its higher education provision. However, in the light of CEG UFP Ltd's decision to withdraw from external accreditation by NCFE and Pearson, the current wording of the programme specifications in relation to programme accreditation is inaccurate and would need to be rectified. It is **advisable** for CEG UFP Ltd to modify programme specifications to accurately describe the recognition of the programmes for progression purposes.

How effective are Coventry FoundationCampus's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing at this college?

42 CEG UFP Ltd is responsible for producing all public information on FoundationCampus programmes, including prospectuses and website content. It states that all such information is signed off by the University partner. This accords with the agreement between the University and Coventry FoC. These arrangements were confirmed in meetings with University staff. Generally, information is both complete and accurate. There have been a number of improvements to CEG UFP Ltd's website which have improved navigation and increased the amount of information available.

Action plan¹

Coventry FoundationCampus action plan relating to Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight December 2014						
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 CEG UFP Ltd:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of information and guidance made available to prospective students (paragraph 31). 	Continuation of high quality of information and guidance made available to prospective students	Monitor quality of information via standard methods, and make enhancements where deficiencies are identified	No target date - part of ongoing quality process governing information	Marketing Manager, FoC	Academic Board	Student surveys Agent surveys
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 Coventry FoundationCampus to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> make structured and systematic use of student performance and 	Structured and systematic use is made of student performance and progression data,	Build looking at performance data into termly audits	January 2015	Chief Academic Officer	Academic Board	Audit reports

¹ The provider 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.

<p>progression data at CEG UFP Ltd and the Campus levels (paragraph 10)</p>	<p>throughout FoC</p>	<p>Continue to request data from university partners</p>	<p>May 2015</p>	<p>Centre Heads, FoC Centres</p>	<p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Evidence of statistical data from university partners on how FoC students are progressing</p> <p>Reports on these data</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> modify programme specifications to accurately describe the recognition of the programmes for progression purposes (paragraph 41). 	<p>Programme specifications accurately describe the recognition of the programmes for progression purposes</p>	<p>Programme specifications are modified accordingly</p>	<p>January 2015</p>	<p>Chief Academic Officer</p>	<p>Academic Board</p>	<p>Modified programme specifications</p> <p>Academic Board minutes</p>

QAA1150a - R4463 - Mar 15

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786