



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of David Game College Ltd, November 2017

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 David Game College Ltd (the College) has made acceptable progress with implementing the action plan from the November 2016 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 The College delivers Pearson Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes at levels 4 and 5 in Business Management and Health and Social Care. It introduced a new Higher National programme in Public and Emergency Services and commenced alternative delivery modes (evening and Saturday classes) in September 2017.

3 The two material changes are an increase in student numbers and the relocation to new premises. The student numbers have increased from 125 at the time of the 2016 review to 288 at the time of the monitoring visit. However, the increase is partly explained by the loss of designation in 2014-15, which meant that the College was not able to recruit that year. At the time of the 2016 review, therefore, there were no continuing students, whereas the total numbers now include new and continuing students. The College recommenced student admissions after securing a collaborative agreement with New College Swindon that enabled students to access student loans.

4 As a result of these significant material changes (the increase in student numbers by more than 20 per cent or 100 students and the new location) the monitoring visit was extended as outlined in the Educational Oversight Annual Monitoring guidance note, and these issues were discussed with the College at the visit. The College is able to support this increase in numbers by the larger new location, extra academic staff, a new administrator, a new admission assistant, further study skills support, and an extended virtual learning environment.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

5 The College has addressed the recommendations from the 2016 review. There is now a formal documented internal procedure for the design, development and approval of new programmes. The College is developing policies and procedures to implement and effectively manage student work placements. The College has also reviewed, and is now beginning to articulate, its approach to enhancing the quality of student learning opportunities.

6 The College has also maintained and developed the good practice identified in the 2016 review by continuing to provide multi-layered and individualised systems of support that enable students to become independent learners. It has also further developed the comprehensive and consistent use of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. While there are

appropriate systems in place, the College needs more time to completely evaluate and understand the impact on student experience and performance.

7 The College has strengthened its quality assurance framework with a formal policy on the Design, Development and Approval of New Programmes. The policy describes clear and robust internal approval processes, including student representation and external participation. The Quality and Standards Committee is responsible for the internal approval of new programmes prior to submission to the awarding organisation. The programme development and design phases are sound, but the College recognises that the scrutiny of new programmes could be strengthened further by not including on an approval panel the programme leader who has been centrally involved in the design and development of the programme. The evidence provided demonstrates that the College is in the process of implementing these processes but they are still in the early stages as no new programmes have been initiated since the 2016 review.

8 The documents to support the implementation and management of the HND Health and Social Care work placement now include a student and employer handbook, a risk assessment and student placement checklist, a Personal and Professional Development module descriptor, and a letter confirming the responsibilities of the student. Feedback from students, staff and employers has informed revisions to the handbook. A Work Experience Manager oversees work placement and is responsible for identifying appropriate employers based on evidence from ILPs, personal tutor interviews and student career ambitions. There are currently appropriate and proportionate safeguards to manage the risks of placements because the College only places students in registered care homes. The College recognises the need to articulate the risk assessment more formally with the increase in student numbers.

9 The College has reviewed its enhancement policies. The recently established Higher Education Management Team is responsible for the enhancement of students' learning opportunities. The actions taken since the 2016 review demonstrate a strategically driven approach to enhancement, although it is too soon to assess the impact on the learning environment and overall student performance. The actions include the development of work experience policies and procedures, enhanced ILPs and internal procedures for the design, development and approval of new programmes.

10 The 2016 review identified that features of good practice are the multi-layered and individualised systems of student support, and the comprehensive and consistent use of ILPs. Students confirm the continued high level and quality of support, induction and mentoring available to them; the College has created a new Administration and Student Services Support role to provide additional student support. The positive developments are workshops and seminars, which have been embedded within the Study Skills classes, providing one-to-one support for students identified as being at risk. The ILP forms now include measurable targets, strengths and areas for development, and an 'at-risk' component that informs the personal tutor of any academic matters that might prevent student progression.

11 The College admissions process is detailed and thorough. It is clearly aligned to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), with entry requirements detailed on the College's website and relevant course handbooks. Applicants whose first language is not English sit an English test. The admissions team interviews all applicants and checks the authenticity of international qualifications by reference to the designated UK national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills (UK NARIC). The College uses recruitment agents to maximise student applications. It ensures the integrity of this process by having specific agent contracts, thoroughly monitoring their performance, and ensuring agents do not make admission decisions.

12 The College has effective annual programme monitoring procedures. There are effective processes for reviewing modules. These module reviews systematically analyse student performance to identify actions for improvement; for example, the introduction of assessment workshops during April 2017 has resulted in improved submission rates and levels of student achievement. Programme Monitoring Reviews (PMR) include tutor module reports, student feedback and external examiner reports, as well as action points from the Programme Management Committee and reports from the Staff Student Liaison Committee. The PMR includes data such as entry qualifications, retention and progression statistics, and the analysis of completion, qualification and destination outcomes. The annual PMRs are formally approved by the Quality and Standards Committee, which maintains oversight of programme monitoring. The recently established Higher Education Management Team receives all programme monitoring committee minutes and operates a rolling action plan at the institutional level.

13 The College is using student data effectively in the programme monitoring procedures. The data returns for the last recruitment year show improving rates of retention and achievement for all recently completing cohorts. For the 2015-16 incoming cohorts, 67 per cent of recruits were retained on the HND Business Management programme (24 of 36), and 56 per cent on the HND Health and Social Care programme (31 of 55). Of those students who were expected to complete by July 2017, 50 per cent gained their target qualification in Business Management (one of two) and 71 per cent in Health and Social Care (five of seven). Retention improved for the 2016-17 cohort, rising to 97 per cent for the HND Health and Social Care programme (66 of 68), and 91 per cent for the HND Business programme (59 of 65). Of the six students entering the second year of the HND Business programme by direct entry, 80 per cent gained their target qualification (four of five).

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

14 The College continues to engage regularly and appropriately with the Quality Code through the regular review and updating of policies and procedures. This is demonstrated by the establishment of a new policy for the Design, Development and Approval of New Programmes. There is evidence of the use of the Quality Code in the admissions process, annual monitoring and associated action planning, student engagement, and student support and guidance.

15 The School uses a number of further external reference points to help assure academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. These include the Qualifications and Credit Framework and the Regulated Qualifications Framework. The College adheres to Pearson's quality management processes and the requirements set out in the awarding organisation's programme specifications, unit specifications, and assessment policies and procedures. Compliance with Pearson expectations is monitored through the external examiner system and the annual monitoring review conducted by the awarding organisation. The College is an accredited member of the Matrix Standard whereby the College is assessed and measured against the information, advice and guidance provided to students.

Section 5: 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 extended monitoring visit was carried out by Dr Colin Fryer, Reviewer, and Catherine Fairhurst, Coordinator, on 23 to 24 November 2017.

QAA2048 - R9812 - Jan 18

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