



This review method
is ESG-compliant

Educational Oversight Review

Anglo American Educational
Services Ltd

February 2025

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About this review

This is a report of an Educational Oversight Review (EOR) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Anglo American Educational Services Ltd (AES).

EOR consists of a number of components. The Core component is a review of a provider's arrangements for maintaining the academic standards and quality of the courses it offers against nine of the Sector-Agreed Principles contained within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024) (the UK Quality Code). This subset of Principles has been mapped to the core requirements that have been set out by the Home Office in relation to educational oversight. Further information about the Core component of EOR can be found in the [Educational Oversight Review Guidance for Providers](#).

The review took place on 26 February 2025 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Mark Langley (Reviewer)
- Dr Gareth Longden (Reviewer)
- Ms Sarah Mullins (Student reviewer).

The QAA Officer for this review was Mr Alan Weale.

In Educational Oversight Review (Core component) the QAA review team:

- determines an outcome against a subset of the Sector-Agreed Principles outlined in the UK Quality Code
- identifies features of good practice
- makes recommendations
- identifies areas of enhancement activity
- determines an overall judgement as to whether the provider meets the Home Office's quality assurance requirements for educational oversight.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission. A dedicated section explains the method for [Educational Oversight Review](#) and has links to other informative documents. QAA reviews are evidence-based processes. Review judgements result from the documents review teams see, and the meetings they hold, and draw upon their experience as peer reviewers and student reviewers.

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) provide the framework for internal and external quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. QAA's review methods are [compliant with these standards](#), as are the [reports we publish](#). More information is available on our [website](#).

This review was conducted in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

Executive summary

Anglo American Educational Services Ltd (AES) has been a partner to United States of America (USA) colleges and universities since 1973, providing educational opportunities abroad designed to enhance students' global perspectives and academic growth. AES collaborates with its USA institutional partners to design and deliver academic programmes and experiential learning opportunities in London, integrating coursework with hands-on experiences.

AES states its mission to be that of striving 'to offer our partners the best available education abroad experience, no matter what service they encounter with us'. Its vision is 'To be the number one education abroad organisation for customer satisfaction and student experience'.

AES is partnered with the University of California, Berkeley, and has premises in central London. In a typical academic year, AES hosts around 500 students, with numbers highest during the summer. AES hosts a diverse cohort of students, many of whom come to London on Student Route visas to participate in academic studies and internship placements. Students join AES for semester-long or short-term programmes, benefitting from experience that combines academic study with hands-on learning. Support services, such as mentorship and orientation activities, are also provided.

AES employs 11 full-time and two part-time staff to support academic-related work. In addition, adjunct faculty, who are all part-time, are employed to deliver specific courses each semester and during the summer session. At the time of the review this consisted of 16 adjunct faculty for the summer and autumn 2024 sessions and the spring 2025 session. A separate team of staff are responsible for the management of housing and accommodation (which are not subject to these review arrangements).

The precise university partnerships that are active at any point in time vary. Examples include the University of Connecticut, Susquehanna University Business School, University of Wisconsin and University of California. AES works with university partners in the USA to align academic courses (modules), assessment methods, and credit systems to fit within students' existing degree frameworks. This is achieved via a series of external partnership agreements with USA universities.

In response to the evolving educational landscape, particularly post-COVID-19, AES has embraced significant changes designed to underline its commitment to enhancing the student experience. The recent rebranding from Anglo American Educational Services to 'AES - Achieve, Excel, Succeed' embodies a renewed focus on innovation and adaptability to directly benefit students. The intention of this refreshed brand identity is to reinforce AES' dedication to fostering success, resilience, and excellence among international students by emphasising the values of achievement, academic rigour, and support throughout their educational journey.

AES has introduced student-centred improvements, such as interactive orientation sessions, to better prepare students for academic and cultural immersion. These educational initiatives provide students with a more engaging, flexible, and supportive learning environment, ensuring that they can adapt and thrive in a global context. By focusing on these strategic shifts, AES aims to continually improve the quality and accessibility of its programmes, delivering an educational experience that is both relevant to current challenges and aligned with students' academic and personal growth.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which Anglo American Educational Services meets the Sector-Agreed Principles, the QAA review team followed the evidence-based

review procedure as outlined in the guidance for Educational Oversight Review (July 2024). Anglo American Services provided the review team with a self-evaluation and supporting evidence. During the review visit, which took place on 26 February 2025, the review team held a total of five meetings with the Chief Executive Officer, Vice Principal Academic Affairs, representatives of the senior staff team, students, teaching staff and professional support staff.

The team found two examples of good practice and identified five recommendations for improvement.

Conclusions

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the higher education provision at Anglo American Educational Services Ltd.

The QAA review team determines that Anglo American Educational Services Ltd:

- **requires action to meet** the Home Office's Quality assurance requirements for educational oversight.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following feature of **good practice**:

- The commitment to embedding experiential learning in their programmes supports the delivery of high-quality learning experiences for students (**Sector-Agreed Principle 3**)
- The commitment to ensuring the academic experience reflects the provider's policies regarding Environmental, Social and Governance and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and for whom they are delivered (**Sector-Agreed Principle 7**)

Recommendations

Where the provider requires action to meet the Home Office's requirements for educational oversight the QAA review team makes the following recommendations:

- Produce and disseminate an Anglo American Educational Services specific Complaints Policy (**Sector-Agreed Principle 12**).
- Provide clear information related to both complaints and appeals in order to ensure that relevant policies and procedures are accessible and transparent (**Sector-Agreed Principle 12**).

For recommendations that relate to areas for development and enhancement that do not impact on the Sector-Agreed Principle being met, the QAA review team makes the following recommendations:

- Further develop its strategic approach to ensure continued alignment with the Sector-Agreed Principles within the 2024 iteration of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (**Sector-Agreed Principle 1**).
- Further develop the range, use and analysis of data to inform the provider's approach to quality, standards and the students' experience (**Sector-Agreed Principle 4**).
- Ensure students are provided with accurate and transparent pre-entry information regarding the internship opportunities available, to enable them to make fully informed decisions (**Sector-Agreed Principle 9**).

Financial sustainability, management and governance

The financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) check has been **satisfactorily** completed. The outcome of the FSMG check for the AES is that **no** material issues were identified.

Explanation of the findings – Sector-Agreed Principles

Principle 1: Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards

Providers demonstrate they have a strategic approach to securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality that is embedded across the organisation.

Findings

1 AES facilitates the delivery of courses for American students choosing to study abroad in the UK for a term or semester. AES agrees a contract with its partner universities on a semesterly basis. As noted in the findings under Sector-Agreed Principle 7, course design is managed by the partner universities, ensuring that the academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications frameworks. AES assists the development process and supports the adjunct faculty to deliver them by acting as an intermediary between its university partners and any UK organisations with which AES works to provide educational experiences. The delineation between the responsibilities of the validating universities and AES as the provider of the education is clear.

2 In reaching its conclusions, the review team recognises that transitional arrangements apply due to the publication of the 2024 UK Quality Code. AES' partner universities maintain control of setting and maintaining standards. For AES, in this context, alignment with the requirements of the 2018 iteration of the Quality Code was easier to demonstrate, but to align with the 2024 iteration, AES will need to consider more transparently how it demonstrates a strategic approach. AES collaborates with its USA institutional partners and their individual requirements for quality assurance. AES' stated aim is to be a leading provider of experiential learning opportunities in London and it offers courses that align with the preferred assessment methods and credit systems of its university partners. Because teaching staff report assessment outcomes directly to the host university, AES does not have to manage those aspects of its provision. Therefore, in terms of the quality of the student learning experience, AES can only strategise around areas related to how it works with its partners to deliver high-quality, internationally focused educational experiences to enhance academic achievement and personal development. AES has already begun this process, evident in its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policies, which are publicly available on its website, but over time will need to ensure that it clarifies for itself and others those roles for which it has control and oversight.

3 AES' relatively small scale means that across the evidence base the team reviewed, deliberative or discursive processes are often informal. For instance, in its interactions with universities, AES emphasises its experience and resources for recruiting suitably qualified staff to teach programmes in London, but this process is often done through email rather than a formal process. Consequently, the link between strategy and outcome is often unclear. For example, many AES staff are adjunct faculty, and some have extensive experience of working within American higher education. The Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) approves any staff appointments for AES before forwarding the appointments to the partner university. The Universities of Wisconsin–Stevens and California agreements confirm this approach, but the Susquehanna University contract has no corresponding requirement. AES clearly meets the requirements of each university, but there is no strategic statement indicating how AES provides the same level of service for each partner, regardless of each institution's contractual requirements.

4 Further to this, while the AES management structure is clear, the lack of Committee Terms of Reference indicating which bodies take responsibility for ensuring AES meets its partners requirements or manages the aspects of business within its purview does not support the existence of a robust strategic approach. Job descriptions for the VPAA and Director of Studies indicate that the VPAA has responsibility for strategic oversight, with the Director of Studies collaborating with partner institutions to strategically develop student cultural integration. The Director of Studies role is new, indicating AES' determination to clarify oversight of the institute's strategic approach. The job description and the CV of the current post-holder indicate AES' determination to appoint a member of staff with experience of both American and UK higher education to act as an adjunct faculty member. The strategic decision to appoint this post arose from board meetings identifying the need to give the VPAA more support. Overall, strategic planning reads as reactive, rather than proactive.

5 To support its strategic aims, AES ensures staff undertake equality, diversity and inclusion training annually. In 2023, AES provided mental health first aid training and this will continue later this year. AES staff have previously attended events offered by the Association of American Study Abroad Programmes (United Kingdom), to inform the institutional approach to Environmental, Social and Governance. Likewise, information provided for students draws on staff experience of attending a London Student Affairs Networking event, indicating the realisation of some key learning about equality, diversity and inclusion policies. There is a commitment to training within the institution, but it would clarify AES' strategic aims if these were seen as part of a strategic plan.

6 While AES, through its collaboration with its partner universities, has designed a governance framework, the flow of that structure and its reporting processes could be clearer. AES monitors, evaluates, and enhances its strategic approach on a regular basis and its company board oversees the strategic direction of academic delivery, receiving monthly reports from the VPAA on the implementation and running of courses in each semester. The minutes indicate that AES considers its strategy at board level and AES then uses a range of meetings to share and discuss management issues. These include biannual 'Townhall' meetings to share key news and offer a forum for discussion, open to all staff. Heads of Department meet with the Chief Executive Officer every Tuesday evening to ensure consistent communication. Heads of Department also present at monthly board meetings, which informs strategy and policy developments. Every third board meeting focuses on strategy, for example making investment decisions about IT improvement, partnership developments, and the appointment of an academic director. However, notes and minutes from all these meetings indicate that while they allow managers to report back to staff on any current issues or projects, they do not indicate a discursive committee process that allows for the presentation and approval of papers or reports.

7 AES shares its governance structure with its students during its orientation process. Sharing its governance structures with its partner universities is more informal because AES is not contractually obliged to do so. In discussing this process with the review team, the institution was clear that it would like the dialogue with its partners to be more two-way. However, without a clear strategic drive, AES cannot empower its relations with its partners. As an illustration, senior staff spoke about the development of the AES' Housing Improvement Strategy, demonstrating that AES is quick to identify issues as they arise and to put plans into action. Locating those plans in a broader strategic vision might insulate AES against any lack of feedback or engagement with its partners.

8 AES plans to establish an Academic Advisory Board to support it in its review of the content of its academic courses. The first meeting is planned for 18 March 2025. The Academic Advisory Board will consist of a chair and four members who are senior professionals in the field of education abroad, based in the USA or UK. The stated aim is to help AES to enhance accessibility and diversity, and the institutional approach to monitoring

and evaluation, and AES regards this as a means of ensuring the use of external expertise to provide a strategic approach to managing the quality and standards of its provision. Such external advice could address how AES' academic standards align with the requirements of its American partner universities and the relevant UK guidelines, such as the Quality Code. The team **recommend** that AES continue to develop its strategic approach to ensure it fully aligns with the principles of the 2024 iteration of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.

9 Overall, the review team concluded that while AES' provision aligns more closely with the 2018 iteration of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education in moving towards alignment with the 2024 version it needs to continue the work it has started to develop its strategic approach. AES therefore **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 3: Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience

Providers plan, secure and maintain resources relating to learning, technology, facilities and staffing to enable the delivery and enhancement of an accessible, innovative and high-quality learning experience for students that aligns with the provider's strategy and the composition of the student body.

Findings

10 AES has appropriate measures in place to plan, secure, and maintain resources to enable the delivery and maintenance of the students' learning experience. Students study with the provider for a relatively short period of time and, as part of the study arrangement, are offered accommodation that is centrally located, and is provided with high-speed Wi-Fi. Students confirmed the accommodation was high-quality, safe, well-maintained, and contributed positively to a sense of community and well-being. Senior staff articulated their approach to planning housing needs and how it informs their strategy and practice.

11 The provider has a basic, but adequate, IT infrastructure which is appropriate for students engaged on short-term study visits. The provider does not currently have a bespoke virtual learning environment (VLE), but since students continue to have access to that of their home university and can access learning resources from there, the lack of a provider VLE is not an issue. Some adjunct faculty, by virtue of their appointment, can also access the VLE of the host institution. The provider is considering the purchase of a VLE in the future to further support learning and to manage elements of the students' interaction with the provider. While such a purchase would clearly enhance provision it is not needed to demonstrate alignment with the Sector-Agreed Principle. The provider has recently moved premises to a modern building which is fit for purpose and is well equipped with office space, the teaching rooms have smart screens and integrated PCs, the building also has a number of communal areas which help to support the students' interaction with staff and their peers. AES' IT resources are fit for purpose and align with the expectations of the Sector-Agreed Principle.

12 The provider has a staff team that is directly employed to support student learning. The team includes a senior leadership team, staff with responsibility for academic partnerships, operations, academic quality, internships, accommodation, facilities, IT, and accounts. Teaching and learning are provided by a tutorial team that comprises some of the core staff team and adjunct staff that are either appointed to deliver a specific course or who are tenured staff of the partner university. The team were able to meet with a number of the tutorial team including both adjunct and tenured faculty. The directly employed adjunct faculty are well qualified and usually already work at higher education institutions and bring with them a wealth of knowledge in pedagogy and discipline-specific expertise. AES' usual expectation is that adjunct faculty will hold, dependent upon the level of course they will be teaching, either a level 7 or 8 qualification. AES' academic expectations are set out in the tutor's contract with further expectations about the provider's approach to teaching and learning being provided in a Staff Handbook which staff confirmed they have received. The VPAA meets with all adjunct faculty to ensure familiarity with AES' approach and practices and includes discussions of key distinctions between the UK and USA's academic systems. AES has an appropriate staff team that aligns well with the expectations of the Sector-Agreed Principle.

13 The provider has well-established arrangements to support students. This is particularly evident in the areas of support for good mental health and wellbeing. While students confirmed they had not made use of these resources, they were aware that they

were available and valued the provision. AES also has appropriate and well-established arrangements for induction and orientation and these offer a further indication of the necessary planning to ensure that appropriate resources are in place to support students. Student feedback shows that they value these arrangements. AES has also made efforts to ensure that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) issues are integrated into both the academic courses and more broadly into college life. AES support for its students is effective and is aligned with the expectations of the Sector-Agreed Principle.

14 Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) are first identified by the partner university and then the provider is notified of this prior to the students' arrival in the UK. The partner university also provides information about any agreed adjustments, such as the award of additional time to complete assessment tasks. This information is then communicated to individual course tutors. This is a reasonable and proportionate approach to effectively supporting students with SpLD given the short amount of time the students are with AES. The provider's premises are accessible for students with restricted mobility and an assessment is made to ensure that the accommodation is appropriate for students with different additional needs. AES' support for students is effective and proportionate and is aligned with the expectations of the Sector-Agreed Principle.

15 The provider has limited course-related learning resources available to directly support students. One faculty mentioned that a substantial number of books were available to support their course, but this was the exception. In some cases, the partner university will identify a course 'core text' which students are either expected to purchase or is accessible through their home VLE. For other modules, faculty will identify learning resources that will support their course. There are two strategies which faculty follow to identify and access resources for their courses. First, tenured faculty at the partner universities or adjunct faculty who are given access to the partner VLE will identify learning resources that are available on the home VLE which are then augmented through open access resources. Second, faculty who do not have access to a home VLE will typically identify open access resources for students. Importantly, the students that the team met all confirmed they felt they had sufficient access to resources to effectively support their studies. In some cases, resources are made available locally by faculty using online depositories. AES has appropriate learning resources to support their courses, which is confirmed by the students' opinions and is aligned with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

16 A particular strength of the courses provided by AES is the way in which experiential learning opportunities are embedded within the courses. These experiential learning opportunities take a variety of forms dependent upon the specific course; typically, however, they involve visits to different educational and cultural venues where students may engage with real-world learning opportunities. Students the team met were strongly supportive of this element of their studies. They found that such opportunities gave them real insights into that context as well as satisfying a key driver for them in travelling to the UK, i.e. to experience the variety of lived experiences in London. Students, for example, valued the opportunities to visit construction sites and cultural and sporting venues, as well as the opportunities that such visits brought to network with professionals in areas that students were interested in exploring further in their careers e.g. fashion, journalism, and legal work. Faculty also discussed with the team how they link such experiential learning to the assessment tasks to create innovative forms of assessment that help shape authentic learning opportunities for the students. A number of faculty explained how they embedded experiential learning opportunities, e.g. visits to theatrical performances, to shape high-quality learning opportunities for students. The team saw this approach as one which was particularly productive and one which aligns well with the intentions of the students in visiting the UK. The team therefore concluded the commitment to embedding experiential learning in programmes which supports the delivery of high-quality learning experiences for students to be **good practice**.

17 Overall, the review team concluded that AES effectively resources the delivery of high-quality learning experiences, especially regarding the accommodation provided, the size and experience of the teaching team, the support offered to students, and the way in which experiential learning opportunities are embedded within the courses. AES therefore **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 4: Using data to inform and evaluate quality

Providers collect, analyse and utilise qualitative and quantitative data at provider, departmental, programme and module levels. These analyses inform decision-making with the aim of enhancing practices and processes relating to teaching, learning and the wider student experience.

Findings

18 AES has a suite of policies and agreements that describe how personal data is collected and used. These policies and agreements effectively address the collection, storage, and use of personal data. In this regard AES' practices are aligned with the expectations of the Sector-Agreed Principle.

19 AES' approach to the use of data to inform and evaluate quality is affected by the limited amount and types of data that are collected, analysed, and utilised. The primary source of data that AES collects is student feedback. AES collects data that relate to different aspects of the students' experiences of study. Data about the student experience of their academic courses is collected via a Course Evaluation Form. The evaluation form explores a range of issues such as the performance of the instructor, the quality of the learning resources, issues of sustainability, the organisation of the course, the quality of the assessment and feedback. The form also provides the opportunity to offer free text responses. These data feed into a regime of feedback to adjunct faculty which facilitates a discussion with members of the core staff team. It was not apparent to the review team how this feedback is brought together and used to inform and evaluate quality beyond the level of the course.

20 Feedback is also gathered on the internship element of the programme. In this case feedback is gathered from the employer at the mid-point and at the end of the internship. Students also complete feedback which is summarised and presented to the internship team at the end of the academic year. The feedback addresses issues associated with the arrangement of the placement, expectations around the placement, the suitability of the placement, the training provided, and the working conditions. The feedback presentation includes a comparison between the current year with historic data which enables analysis of trends to be conducted. Some of students that the team met expressed concerns over the suitability of their placements (these concerns are discussed in more detail under Sector-Agreed Principle 9) and maybe an indication that although feedback is gathered, the extent to which, and how, it is then acted upon by AES, could be more effective.

21 Student achievement data is collected as part of AES' obligation to submit marks to the partner universities. Marking is conducted by the adjunct faculty member as is described in the AES Faculty Handbook following advice offered by the VPAA on the differences between the UK and USA educational systems, information about which is also included in the Faculty Handbook. Marks are collated by the VPAA (128) prior to submission to the home university. It is not clear however that AES analyses these data to examine issues of performance across time, between courses, or between cohorts or other demographic groups.

22 Data is provided to some adjunct faculty by the partner university. These data are provided at the level of the course and allow comparison with mean data from the university's department and college levels. The data relate the student experience to measures which address the student's overall experience of the course, the course's contribution to addressing learning outcomes, the performance of the instructor, and student engagement in the course. These data also allow for an assessment to be made of change

over time against these measures. It was recognised in the meeting with staff that access to such data would be of value to senior management and to more of the faculty team. The review team agreed that this would be a significant enhancement. The review team therefore encourage AES to explore ways in which it can formalise the approach where data is shared by partner universities so that AES can benefit from access to both qualitative and quantitative data.

23 As a small provider, whose students are only with them for a relatively short amount of time, it is not unreasonable for AES to focus on the student experience and in this light the gathering of student feedback is a sensible approach. However, the lack of data collection in relation to student achievement and about student demographics substantially and negatively affects the ability of the provider to inform and evaluate its approach to quality enhancement. In reaching its conclusions, the review team recognises that transitional arrangements apply due to the publication of the 2024 UK Quality Code and AES is seeking to transition towards a more intentional approach to the collection, analysis, and use of data. The review team therefore **recommend** AES to further develop the range, use and analysis of data to inform the provider's approach to quality, standards and the students' experience (Sector-Agreed Principle 4).

24 Overall, the review team concluded that AES' use of data aligns more closely with the 2018 iteration of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and that over time AES will need to develop the range, use, and analysis of data so that its approach to informing and evaluating quality is more closely aligned with the new Sector-Agreed Principle. AES therefore **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 5: Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision

Providers regularly monitor and review their provision to secure academic standards and enhance quality. Deliberate steps are taken to engage and involve students, staff and external expertise in monitoring and evaluation activity. The outcomes and impact of these activities are considered at provider level to drive reflection and enhancement across the provider.

Findings

25 AES demonstrates a clear commitment to monitoring its provision to secure academic standards and enhance quality in most of its areas of provision. The Action Plan arising from the 2023 annual monitoring outlines the steps that AES has already taken, and is in the process of taking, to both secure academic standards and to maintain and improve quality. The provider's recognition of its responsibility for quality assurance is detailed within the job descriptions of the VPAA and the Director of Studies. The Director of Studies role is a recent innovation and has the potential to help secure standards and enhance quality by providing support to, and being a link between, the VPAA and the adjunct faculty. The appointment of the Director of Studies therefore is an important strategic and operational enhancement to the provider's approach to enhancing its provision.

26 The Academic Committee meetings provide a forum where discussion about standards and quality can take place. For example, the demand for new courses to address student preferences is discussed in this forum, it is here that new course development, for example, in Data Science, Data ESG, and Finance are considered.

27 Student feedback is actively collected, reviewed and discussed, this feedback allows AES to identify areas of concern and best practice both within and between cohorts. Best practice is shared in part through the Academic Committee meetings. Further evidence of AES' approach to monitoring quality and standards is evidenced through the VPAA's engagement with adjunct faculty which can be seen as an outworking of the VPAA's overall responsibility to "Monitor and maintain academic standards and course delivery". These discussions provide a mechanism for student feedback to be addressed as it demonstrates a direct line of communication for addressing concerns between students, the leadership, and the faculty. AES also further demonstrates its commitment to monitoring quality through the practice of peer observation of teaching. The team met with staff who had participated in this process who confirmed how useful a practice it was for them. In addition, some of the partner universities also conduct assessments of teaching quality which provides both an assurance of the quality of the teaching and AES with external evidence to guide its enhancement of provision. This multi-faceted approach ensures a comprehensive overview of the provider's approach to quality and standards is in place.

28 AES actively reviews its provision through further mechanisms, including its engagement with the partner universities. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Summer Programme debrief illustrates a collaborative approach, with the partner university engaged in recommending changes and commenting on quality and standards. The same document highlights concern about remote internships, which were a response to the Covid-19 pandemic but the decision is to continue to offer remote internships. The partner's engagement indicates a willingness on their part to critically assess provision and engage with AES. Similarly, discussions between adjunct faculty and the Director of Studies shows a willingness on the part of AES to review provision to enhance quality.

29 The monitoring and review processes inform practical steps that AES takes to enhance the provision. For example, the Action Plan provides evidence of training initiatives

implemented in response to identified needs. Feedback gathered from students on the Berkeley Programme is directly communicated to staff by the VPAA which has facilitated targeted improvements, including limits to group sizes, changes to assessment, access to learning resources, and changes to the syllabus. The sharing of advice and best practice is evidenced in Academic Committee meetings; these semesterly meetings help to foster a culture of continuous review and enhancement. Other illustrations of the steps taken by the provider to enhance provision can be seen in the responsiveness to adapt the types of cultural visits in response to student feedback. These actions demonstrate a responsive and proactive approach to enhancing the learning experience and help to secure standards and quality.

30 AES recognises the value of external perspectives in informing quality assurance practices, however, at the moment this is somewhat limited in practice, being largely limited to feedback from the partner universities. AES intends to partially address this through the development of an Academic Advisory Board which already has a defined Terms of Reference and a provisional membership list. This biannual initiative will have its first meeting in March 2025 and demonstrates a commitment to seeking external expertise. The provider also values the contributions of visiting USA faculty as a way to involve external perspectives and this was evident in the meetings with staff.

31 The provider actively pursues opportunities to enhance its provision both in response to feedback and to its strategic priorities. The VPAA Board Report identifies some of the ways in which AES' strategic priorities are developed, for example with regard to the development of closer ties with UK universities to foster further partnerships. This commitment to expanding partnerships is further evidenced by the increased number of USA partner universities. The provider's curriculum is also evolving to better meet changing student needs, as demonstrated by the addition of an ESG course in Business and developments of provision in the areas of business, media, and health sciences. Improvements have also been made to the information provided about internships in an attempt to ensure that students have access to comprehensive resources, the extent to which this is successful is discussed elsewhere (Principle 9: Recruitment). AES has also sought to enhance its provision through its commitment to DEI issues which is illustrated in part by the development of a British Life and Culture course. The hosting of Career Building workshops also represents a tangible enhancement to the student experience. Finally, the VPAA has a dedicated budget to support staff development which helps to ensure that staff have access to opportunities to enhance their pedagogic skills and subject knowledge. These initiatives demonstrate a proactive and ongoing commitment to enhancing the quality and relevance of the provider's offerings.

32 Overall, the review team concluded that AES demonstrates a fit for purpose system for monitoring, evaluating, and enhancing its provision, although this should be strengthened in respect of internships. Through a combination of internal processes, staff and student involvement, and external engagement, the provider actively seeks to secure academic standards and enhance the quality of the learning experience. The evidence suggests that the provider takes deliberate steps to reflect on its provision and implement changes to improve the student experience. Therefore, the team concluded that the provider **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 7: Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes

Providers design, develop, approve and modify programmes and modules to ensure the quality of provision and the academic standards of awards are consistent with the relevant Qualifications Framework. Providers ensure their provision and level of qualifications are comparable to those offered across the UK and, where applicable, The Framework of Qualifications for The European Higher Education Area.

Findings

33 Although located in England, AES programmes must also meet academic standards consistent with the national qualifications and credit frameworks of its USA partner universities. As the Susquehanna University accreditation certificate indicates, the universities approve the courses with their regional accrediting agencies and, in some cases, professional body requirements. Adjunct faculty at AES share relevant documentation with their home institutions and AES supports them to do so. Email exchanges indicate that adjunct faculty often receive a draft of the previous semester's syllabus which they then update. Faculty confirm this, and they discuss any changes with the VPAA, who then ensures adjunct faculty send the partner university a draft syllabus for approval and make any amendments if required. For example, an email indicates that AES followed this process for a data analytics course it teaches for Susquehanna University. AES does not engage in any formal programme approval process, but nor does it operate an internal approval process to ensure it maintains oversight of the courses it offers. Such oversight rests with the VPAA and Director of Studies on an informal basis.

34 Most adjunct faculty working at AES have extensive experience of curriculum development for study abroad, for example University of Connecticut adjunct faculty are familiar with guidance about syllabus content, reading and assignment requirements and grading standards. For those that do not have experience, the VPAA provides individual advice before the member of staff submits the draft syllabus to the partner university for approval, evidenced by email exchanges with University of Connecticut faculty demonstrating that the university agreed a syllabus with the home campus as part of its approval process. AES also responds to any review of courses by a host university. AES faculty update each syllabus at the end of each iteration of its delivery to reflect improvements in the curriculum and the most up-to-date scholarship. For example, the Urban Anthropology Syllabus refers to recent scholarship, demonstrating that AES regularly updates each syllabus. The process of course approval is limited to writing a syllabus and does not involve AES in university-level programme rewrites.

35 Syllabus descriptors feature learning outcomes and assessment details, as well as guidance about academic integrity and grading descriptors. These are clear in their explanation and detailed in their content. The module details for British Life and Culture provide a clear syllabus. Meeting notes demonstrate that AES identifies, hires and co-supervises adjunct faculty, it also demonstrates that the VPAA meets with staff responsible for producing a new syllabus and advises and checks the content. The joint approach to producing and revising course materials is clear and effective.

36 During a course development process AES encourages faculty to reflect the AES policies on ESG and DEI. AES has received the Planet Mark accreditation for its commitment in this area. Environmental sustainability is central to AES' identity as an academic partner, and some of its courses focus directly on these topics, so reflect the spirit of the ESG policy. Similarly, through a combination of requests from partners, or the advice

of the lecturing staff delivering courses, AES is committed to engaging guest speakers from diverse backgrounds. This approach to both ESG and DEI may or may not be a requirement of the partner institution, therefore AES' the commitment to ensuring the academic experience reflects the providers policies regarding Environmental, Social and Governance and Diversity Equity and Inclusion, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and for whom they are delivered, is **good practice**.

37 To ensure the meaningful involvement of students in the design, development, approval and modification of programmes and modules, where it can, AES focuses on Course Evaluation Forms. Email exchanges and the subsequent re-issue of a new syllabus indicate that faculty make changes to courses by responding to student feedback. AES clearly gathers feedback and responds to it informally where it can, or passes information on to the relevant university staff, but it cannot track issues with its partner universities, because those partners control any programme development. However, AES does not have a course development policy, so it is not clear how it captures its partners' expectations. Where AES can make student-centred improvements is in the delivery of its interactive orientation sessions, which aim to provide students with a more engaging, flexible, and supportive learning environment. Such changes are evidence of a commitment to continual improvement, albeit one limited to core elements of the student experience.

38 Overall, the review team concluded that because AES' contractual obligations limit how it engages in the design, development, approval and modification of programmes, there is sufficient oversight, AES therefore **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 9: Recruiting, selecting and admitting students

Providers operate recruitment, selection and admissions processes that are transparent, fair and inclusive. Providers maintain and publish accurate, relevant and accessible information about their provision, enabling students to make informed choices about their studies and future aspirations.

Findings

39 AES does not recruit students directly; however courses are introduced to students at partner universities and international study events by the partner universities. AES is invited by partner universities to offer in-person and virtual recruitment sessions to support prospective students, setting out clear course information in presentations. The example presentation provided gives a clear indication of the depth and range of information offered in these sessions. Students can learn more about the courses AES offers, as well as financial obligations and the dates and timelines prospective students and advisors need to meet. Presentations are delivered at least four months prior to the study abroad start date, leaving students enough time to make a decision about their participation in the programme. AES staff also attend study abroad fairs and similar events in the USA to further broaden student recruitment. Staff are supported to participate in recruitment activity through meetings and other channels for disseminating information prior to recruitment activity. Members of staff involved in this recruitment activity confirmed they felt prepared and able to undertake this effectively.

40 The AES website [[AES | Experiential Learning and Living](#)] presents detailed information for prospective students on the programme, the application process and the facilities available ensuring that students have robust information available that enables them to make informed choices. AES also provides documentation to prospective students and their advisors to enable them to make informed choices about recruitment and access. Whilst there is no formalised process for checking the accuracy of published information, marketing materials are developed with partner approval processes and regularly updated with any required changes.

41 Given AES' role as a provider of education experience for students at USA universities, the awarding university has oversight of the any recruitment process, for example, the University of Connecticut Admissions Policy sets out that university's recruitment process.] While AES defers to its partner universities for the application, selection and admission processes, university partners consult AES about any 'borderline cases'. As part of the entry requirements to the AES programmes, students are required to have a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.75. If students do not have the required GPA, the contract between the partner university and AES stipulates that the partner university must supply a reference supporting the acceptance of a lower GPA. The VPAA is responsible for ensuring such references are in place and provide the appropriate assurance the applicant will benefit from the educational experience at AES for summer 2025 courses in August 2024. Students applying for an internship also participate in an interview with the AES internship team for further evaluation. The interview template seeks information in relation to education, skills, experience and motivations and provides information to the student on the internship process.

42 For students accepted for the study abroad programme, AES then leads the communication process with the student. Email communications detail the kind of support AES can provide. AES also sends students online handbooks and video guidance as part of the orientation process (described in more detail in paragraph 52).

43 Student feedback is collected through surveys and the Student Ambassador. Examples of Student Ambassador feedback indicate that students are positive about the support provided by AES during the recruitment, selection and admissions process, noting that the level of information provided through information resources and orientation was useful. The review team also discussed recruitment, selection and admissions process with students during the review and they echoed the generally positive view expressed through Student Ambassador feedback. Students did however highlight some misgivings in relation to information concerning internship opportunities provided as part of the recruitment process.

44 Regarding internships, which for many students are a particularly significant part of their reason for coming to the UK, the review team have concerns about aspects of the information provided to students and the suitability of the internship to provide the experience the students expected. Approximately half of the students that the team met offered a mixed assessment of the internship experience, with some indicating inconsistent pre-arrival communication with long gaps in contact and instances where promised employment sectors proved unavailable, a concern corroborated by the review team's assessment of the feasibility of some internship placements being available to students on such short-term visits. , In some cases, the inability for a student to secure a placement in a specific area had significant implications for them with their home university. This resulted in anxiety for some students while alternative arrangements were put in place. While concerns raised during placements were communicated to AES and were documented by staff, some students felt these were not always adequately resolved.

45 The provider does, demonstrate structured administrative practices for internships, including clear contractual frameworks outlining expectations for all parties and separate host agreements to formalise arrangements. AES also takes proactive measures, such as the identification of pre-arrival preferences that aim to align placements with student interests and use employer feedback mechanisms to assess the quality of the internship from the host's perspective. Students also receive detailed guidance about internship expectations and feedback is systematically collected from them. Nevertheless, although the provider's administrative infrastructure regarding internships is robust, greater rigour in vetting placement viability, clarifying realistic opportunities during pre-departure communication, and ensuring timely resolution of issues would considerably strengthen the programme. The review team therefore **recommend** that AES ensures students are provided with accurate and transparent pre-entry information regarding the internship opportunities available, to enable them to make fully informed decisions.

46 In the case of an internship breaking down, which the review team recognises as an inevitable possibility and one which is beyond the control of AES, the provider has put in place appropriate measures to allow students to complete their academic requirements without penalty. The review team considers this to be an important and student focussed action which is to be welcomed.

47 Overall, the review team concluded that, with the exception of the specific instance of information related to internships, procedures for application, recruitment, selection and admissions to the AES courses are reliable, fair, transparent and accessible. AES provides detailed information to prospective students and partner universities that should enable students to make informed decisions. The review team concluded therefore that on balance AES **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 10: Supporting students to achieve their potential

Providers facilitate a framework of support for students that enables them to have a high-quality learning experience and achieve their potential as they progress in their studies. The support structure scaffolds the academic, personal and professional learning journey, enabling students to recognise and articulate their progress and achievements.

Findings

48 Given the nature of the relationship between AES and its partners, AES has a limited remit in relation to supporting students to achieve their ultimate potential, however they do have a responsibility for ensuring an effective transition into the UK programme, and for the academic, professional and pastoral support provided whilst students are studying at AES. The level of support varies depending on the type of arrangement, for example some students are supported predominantly by the partner university Faculty Directors, as evidenced in the Faculty Director statements.

49 Each university introduces its students to AES at the outset of the application process, via the arrangements described in paragraph 39. AES makes no other contact with students until they have committed to the study abroad programme. AES sends students a welcome email introducing AES and its team, together with an e-copy of the Student Handbook which features information about key staff at AES and guidance about attendance and visa compliance.

50 AES informs students about the ongoing academic, professional, and pastoral support services available to them through the detailed and thorough predeparture orientation. The predeparture orientation highlights pastoral services and activities available to students while in London in an accessible and easy to read format. AES then provides arrival orientation material which follows the same format but provides more local specific information. AES has also recently introduced sustainability orientation to shape student information about their environmental impact as an international student. In addition, students receive a weekly email with reminders of tasks and activities. Student feedback through the Student Ambassador is outstandingly positive in relation to the student orientation and the information available to support students transitioning into life in the UK.

51 AES students also have access to well-being support through Mindhamok, which is a helpline and counselling service that includes live chats, podcasts, online content and referral services. Students are made aware of this through flyers and AES actively encourage students to take advantage of these resources throughout their educational experience through emails. Given the nature of the services AES provides, staff and student recognition of the need for non-curricular activities to promote students' sense of belonging is essential. The Student Services Manager organises two social events each month and aims to reflect the cultural diversity of the student body in London. For example, for the University of Connecticut partnership, AES has offered cultural excursions and museum visits, which give students a chance to explore more of London and the UK. The weekly newsletters from the student services manager highlight local attractions and dining recommendations. Students were positive about the social and wellbeing support available to them.

52 A key mechanism for supporting students' professional development is the provision of internships. The internship team undertake interviews with perspective students to support selection of an appropriate internship opportunity, however, as noted in paragraphs 45-47, there are instances where students did not feel that the opportunities made available to them

were aligned with their expectations. The Internship Handbook provides useful information on the internship process and information on what to expect at the interview and when they start the internship and offers support for CV or cover letter writing. This is further supported by the AES Internship Seminar which requires students to develop analytical and critical thinking skills about the internship itself and reflect on skill development as part of the internship experience. Staff noted the value of this course in securing further placements and employment in the future. Although approximately half of students met by the review team had concerns about their internship experience, those that felt well matched with their internship provider were generally positive about the experience and the opportunities for skill development and networking. Students did also note that further information prior to starting the internship would be useful, this is supported by student feedback which suggests improvements could be made in relation to internship communication, and staff confirmed that action has been taken to provide an introduction as a result of student feedback.

53 USA partners have responsibility for identifying students with additional needs and sharing this information where permission is granted by the student. Staff confirmed that information is shared effectively and were able to provide examples of reasonable adjustments made as a result. Students with physical requirements also complete relevant paperwork to ensure they can use the buildings safely. Again, staff were able to provide examples of reasonable adjustments.

54 AES schedules regular staff training sessions, which includes mental first aid, managing student expectations and gender diversity. In addition, staff receive training direct from Mindhamok to ensure they understand how the service works. An email exchange demonstrates that all USA partner universities and staff involved in the delivery of the programme in the UK, are aware of the mental health support services available to the students.

55 In conclusion, students are provided with detailed information about AES, the context and the support available to them at the start of their programme, which enables an effective transition to studying in the UK. Support is available to students with additional needs and to support student wellbeing and a sense of belonging. Whilst there are some concerns noted in relation to information and communication, the internships are a key mechanism for supporting students' professional development and transferable skills. The review team therefore conclude that AES **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 11: Teaching, learning and assessment

Providers facilitate a collaborative and inclusive approach that enables students to have a high-quality learning experience and to progress through their studies. All students are supported to develop and demonstrate academic and professional skills and competencies. Assessment employs a variety of methods, embodying the values of academic integrity, producing outcomes that are comparable across the UK and recognised globally.

Findings

56 The adjunct faculty for each partner university have responsibility for teaching, learning, and assessment for the courses they deliver on behalf of the home university. AES supports this process. At the outset of each course, students receive a copy of their syllabus as prepared by the adjunct faculty and approved by the partner institution, as noted in Sector-Agreed Principle 7. Each syllabus clarifies the purposes of the course, its teaching, learning, and assessment contents and any required reading. Partner universities expect all undergraduate programmes to reflect current scholarship, although this is not formally recorded. However, AES makes every effort to ensure its courses adhere to the highest standards of university teaching and the VPAA and Director of Studies review the scholarly content of courses as part of their course checks. The VPAA examines each syllabus, consulting with instructors where required, and AES Faculty Meetings allow adjunct faculty to raise generic issues related to teaching and learning on courses and record this process. The checks are effective, evidenced by the Race and Gender course where over half the texts are from the last four years. Following its checks, AES then sends the syllabus to the host university for peer-review. The partner university makes the ultimate decision about the quality and suitability of the module.

57 The Race and Gender course also demonstrates that teaching, learning and assessment are constructively aligned, providing students with a clear opportunity to demonstrate their achievements. As a course it offers significant opportunities for students to reflect on and reinforce their prior learning, skills and knowledge, and thereby fulfil their potential. Given the variety of partners with which AES works, other course documents do not follow the same format as the Race and Gender syllabus. The Modern British History Syllabus and the Modern Drama Syllabus both lack a reading list and are variable in the quality of their presentation. However, the assessment elements are consistently clear and learning outcomes link to the catalogue descriptions of each course at the partner university.

58 Assessments combine written and practical or work-facing learning. Students confirm they enjoy the diet of tasks, even though at times they find the workload too heavy. Many students are taking courses alongside an internship, and as indicated by the Internship Self-Evaluation Form, internship placements follow rigorous guidelines for completion of projects. For some modules, students only receive academic credit on completion of an internship learning seminar with an AES adjunct in London or online with a member of faculty at the home university campus. The aim is to regard the internship as a career-building exercise. Where possible, visiting faculty to the UK attend the internship site visits with the AES Internship Manager or Lead Coordinator. Visiting faculty also attend scheduled Academic Committee Meetings.

59 Staff can provide alternative assessment options. For example, the Modern Drama course, provides an opportunity for students to reflect on a series of performances that they attend outside formal learning hours. If students require alternative assessments to accommodate a reasonable adjustment on health or personal grounds, AES liaises with partner universities to ensure suitable forms of assessment are in place. A letter

demonstrates that the university informs AES of a student's needs. Although instances are few if an internship must end suddenly, AES staff can consult with the partner university to agree an alternative assessment[051 DSP Example Letter]. AES has also developed a consultancy brief to replace the internship for one course, so staff are clear that if alternatives are required, they would liaise with the external partner university to ensure the student's needs are met.

60 The AES staff contract requires staff to be available to give students feedback and to provide a letter grade to the partner university. Students receive written feedback for all assessed work, but how this occurs varies from course to course reflecting each partner university's requirements. The VPAA checks all grades before they are submitted to the partner university to ensure consistency of grading. However, it is the adjunct faculty's responsibility to submit the grade to the university for which they work. All matters regarding grading and assessment sit entirely with the relevant university. In line with its agreement with the University of Connecticut, the University's School of Record issues official transcripts for the courses AES delivers, the same is true of other universities. AES informs its instructors about any assessment arrangements with the issue of their contract

61 In line with its partner institutions' expectations, and to ensure that staff involved in facilitating learning are appropriately qualified, AES seeks to recruit staff with a minimum of a PhD in liberal arts subjects, or an MBA or equivalent in business. AES often conducts an interview with the potential new adjunct faculty, ideally when there are staff from the partner institution available in London. The VPAA leads the appointment process and liaises with the USA partner universities. AES follows a specified process for hiring new faculty, and then submits their CV, proposed syllabus and references to the partner university. The discussions recorded in meetings demonstrate that the decision following the application of a recruitment process takes place. Email evidence indicates that once it approves a syllabus and staff CV in a meeting AES then sends the information to the appropriate university for approval. Given the oversight of the partner universities this process is robust.

62 All AES adjunct faculty receive a copy of the AES Faculty Handbook with their employment contract. This provides essential information about AES' expectations of staff, key contacts and how AES evaluates staff contributions. The Faculty Handbook does not actually set out what a candidate should supply for a course approval by a partner university, nor the process they can expect to follow. However, staff that met the review team were clear that everything they required was in the contract and the handbook indicating that there is shared understanding amongst the staff. Adjunct faculty receive further advice and support from the AES academic team and often from the visiting USA faculty. The support, written and interpersonal, is therefore effective.

63 The recently appointed Director of Studies is a part-time post that supports the VPAA to maintain academic oversight by providing further support for academic staff. The job description is loosely written and at times informal (e.g. "Liaison with Leslie and academic team"), but AES intends the post to combine administration with additional teaching at AES or elsewhere. The aim is to bring an enhanced level of peer-review of teaching practice to bear on course development to distinguish such practice more clearly from the leadership offered by the VPAA in programme management, development and USA liaison. AES supports its adjuncts through Teaching Observation Reviews, Academic Committee Meetings, Faculty Mixers and one-to-one meetings with the VPAA and Director of Studies as needed. The faculty mixer events link visiting faculty directors from partner universities with AES adjunct faculty and the Director of Studies gathers ideas at these events for discussion at subsequent committee meetings. The team affirms the establishment to the Director of Studies role and encourages AES to optimise the opportunities that role the offers.

64 Tenured faculty also travel to AES to observe and teach classes and value the ability

to share ideas and knowledge with their UK colleagues. Statements from three faculty directors from partner universities indicate that over the last year the sustained presence of professors and senior academic administrative staff visiting the UK has improved close and highly effective working relations. While the statements are not evaluative, they do indicate the effectiveness of AES' improvements to working relations with its partners.

65 The VPAA holds an Academic Committee meeting each semester and during summer sessions for all current AES adjunct faculty. Visiting faculty directors from partner universities and adjuncts from the prior term are invited. Meeting minutes indicate a report mechanism for senior staff to inform staff about any developments and provide opportunities of staff to make comment. While minutes from the previous meeting are read, there are no actions or action plans, so there are no visible and therefore measurable outcomes from this process.

66 AES asks all students to complete a Course Evaluation form anonymously in the final week of the course to support their reflection on their learning experience. AES academic teams consider the feedback and send the outcomes to the relevant faculty. Faculty then use this information to inform subsequent iterations of the course. Where adjunct faculty also receive feedback from their host university, they value the combination of the two perspectives the feedback offers. AES also holds debrief meetings with each partner university at the end of their semester/Summer session to discuss the completed programme, including lessons learnt from the current intake, and areas of teaching and learning for future enhancement. However, the team noted that the example minutes provided do not indicate that student feedback has been considered, but rather that staff address issues they have experienced during the delivery of the module.

67 As a provider of courses, AES does not oversee the transition between academic levels, further study or employment. However, some AES assessment activities do explore future developments like internship academic seminars. The Internship Seminar Syllabus is a clear example of how AES helps students to consider the transition from study to employment. Similarly, the Internship Research Paper Syllabus features a reflective seminar that encourages students to consider the significance of their self-development and learning in advance of their next academic and career steps. Beyond these course level instances, academic and pastoral support rests with the partner university.

68 As a service provider for its USA university partners, AES observes their information technology policies. For example, the University of South Florida Artificial Intelligence policy. Adjunct faculty members at AES access their host university's online platforms and software. AES also has its own policies for device and internet usage of machine on its sites that staff receive during their induction. Similarly, AES must observe its partners' policies for academic integrity. Each partner has its own policies reflecting the fact that in the USA system faculty are responsible for policing academic integrity and using grading penalties to do so. AES intends to develop a set of general guidelines for the 2025 Faculty Handbook and will discuss that at Academic Committee meetings but must observe the guidance of its university partners if it is to ensure students and staff understand what is expected of them throughout the learning journey. However, even a statement about academic integrity would clarify responsibilities for students.

69 Overall, the review team concluded that within the confines of its contractual agreements, AES provides a collaborative and inclusive approach that enables students to have a high-quality learning experience and to progress through their studies. Where AES provides support, it does so to help students develop and demonstrate academic and professional skills and competencies. AES ensures that assessment employs a variety of methods, embodying the values of academic integrity, and producing outcomes that meet the requirements of its American partners. AES therefore **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 12: Operating concerns, complaints and appeals processes

Providers operate processes for complaints and appeals that are robust, fair, transparent and accessible, and clearly articulated to staff and students. Policies and processes for concerns, complaints and appeals are regularly reviewed and the outcomes are used to support the enhancement of provision and the student experience.

Findings

70 Student concerns can be collected through student feedback mechanisms such as the Student Ambassador and student surveys. Examples of Student Ambassador feedback were provided which included suggestions for enhancement such as more information on insurance or placement organisations. Some examples of changes as a result of student feedback were also provided including the introduction of a cricket visit, and diversification of assessment. This suggests that students do have a forum to raise any informal concerns or suggestions with AES and that action is taken as a result.

71 AES does not currently have a policy or process for formal complaints or appeals. AES delivers courses on behalf of its partners and therefore students are expected to follow the partner university's appeals and complaints policies and procedures. Students noted that if they wanted to appeal an academic decision, they would follow the partner university processes, which is generally to initially discuss this with the lecturer. There was less awareness of the ability to complain formally and what process to follow if this relates to AES provision. Whilst it is acknowledged that the partner university should make students aware of their policies and procedures in relation to complaints and appeals, and that working with a wide variety of partners can make signposting to the correct policy challenging, the review team did not find any information related to complaints or appeals in the review of the Academic Student handbook, Pre-Departure Orientation or the Internship Student Handbook and felt that this did impact on transparency and accessibility. The review team **recommend** that AES provide clear information related to both complaints and appeals in order to ensure relevant policies and procedures are accessible and transparent.

72 AES states that students are informed at enrolment to direct complaints relating to overall academic progress, student life, welfare and internships to the Student Services Manager, however the word 'complaint' is not articulated in the student facing documentation reviewed and it is unclear what action would then be taken. When discussing appeals and complaints with staff at the review visit staff did note that concerns could be raised with AES, however there is not currently a formalised process to action these. Students stated that they would contact AES about concerns, however they were unclear on whether they had any recourse if they remained dissatisfied.

73 Discussion with AES staff suggested that if formal complaints or appeals were submitted to the partner university, they would communicate this to AES. An example was provided where a home university had communicated because of a student complaint, which was then effectively resolved, however a formal process for how this takes place and whether this is reported and monitored is not apparent. AES has stated a commitment to introducing a Complaints Procedure Policy by Summer 2025 resulting from enquiries made during this review process. The review team therefore **recommend** that AES produce and disseminate an Anglo American Educational Services specific Complaints Policy.

74 Overall, although policies related to academic appeal and complaints are available through the partner universities, these are not made easily accessible and transparent by

AES. In addition, there is currently no policy or procedure for students to formally complain about their experience at AES that would allow AES to ensure they promote enhancement. The review team conclude that AES therefore **does not align** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Enhancement initiatives

Commentary on institutional approach to enhancement

75 AES does not have a written policy or guidance on its approach to enhancement and as such the use of the term enhancement is used loosely and often interchangeably with the word improvement. The document setting out its mission and vision states that the recent rebranding exercise "...signifies a strategic evolution designed to enhance our service offerings..." which provides an indication that AES is committed to enhancing the service it provides. However, as explained in Sector-Agree Principle 1, (see paragraph 8 and associated recommendation) the lack of clarity concerning AES' approach to strategic working impacts on the clarity of its approach to enhancing its provision.

76 This is not to say that enhancements are not occurring. There are many examples of improvements taking place where these have been detected through the extant quality assurance processes (see paragraph 29). Paragraph 31 also sets out a number of examples of enhancements that have been made, including broadening the curriculum to meet changing student needs and its commitment to DEI issues.

77 The Company Board has oversight of AES' organisational approach and direction with the responsibility for institutional level enhancement ultimately lying with the Chief Executive Officer. This responsibility is delegated operationally to the VPAA in respect of the academic services provided by AES. The VPAA, most recently, has been supported by the new post of Director of Studies. The establishment of the Director of Studies post itself is viewed by the review team as an example of a significant enhancement (paragraph 4 and 25).

78 Overall, the review team concluded that AES' is an organisation committed to enhancing its provision but that enhancement is reactive rather than purposeful and strategic.

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