



## Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of KLC School of Design, June 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 KLC School of Design (the School) has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision from the June 2016 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

### Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 There have been no major changes since the review visit in May 2016. As at the time of the previous review visit, the School has approval from the University of Brighton to offer five higher education programmes: a level 5 diploma offered in full-time and blended learning modes of delivery; a bachelor's degree with honours; and a foundation degree offered through onsite or online modes of delivery. At the time of the visit there were 177 students enrolled on the higher education programmes, a similar figure as at the time of the 2016 visit.

### Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 While all actions have not been completed, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that, on balance, the School is making acceptable progress in developing and implementing the action plan arising from the June 2016 review. The virtual learning environment has been developed further, which has encouraged broader student engagement. Engagement with employers remains central to the School's strategy. Students have the opportunity to engage with enhancing the learning experience and the training of student representatives is consistently delivered, although both areas would benefit from further development. Information on the academic appeal process is outlined clearly in course handbooks and is aligned fully with awarding body regulations. The School has published a statement to support its approach to enhancement, although to meet fully the recommendation of the 2016 review the School needs to build on this statement and develop a coherent strategy for implementation. The School has made significant progress in the development of a process for analysing, evaluating and acting on student data on retention and achievement. Admission policies and the quality enhancement and assurance system continue to take full account of sector expectations.

4 The School has successfully built on the features of good practice. In addition to taking deliberate steps to enhance the quality of existing interactive online teaching materials and methods, it has encouraged broader student engagement with the virtual learning environment through the 'Coffee Shop Forum'. As a consequence of a focus on this area, the School actively participates in a UK-wide forum that shares best practice in the delivery of interactive online teaching. Engagement with employers remains central to the School's strategy, which aims to maximise student employment opportunities. Consequently, the School continues to invest in the careers department, which continuously consults, engages and encourages student direct interaction with design professionals, for example, through a series of inspiration guest lectures.

5 The School has made good progress with implementing the recommendations from the 2016 review. Some actions require further development to strengthen the impact on student engagement with their learning experience. The progress against the recommendations are monitored systematically in the School action plan, both by the Academic Board and through the wider meeting structure as deemed appropriate. There is evidence of some student input to this process, with the participation of a student representative on the Academic Board.

6 Students confirmed that they have opportunity to engage with the enhancement of their learning experience, primarily at individual course level, and through a range of formal and informal feedback mechanisms. However, current students would like more interaction between the various course groups to encourage a consistent School approach to comparing the student experience as a basis for enhancing all provision.

7 The training of student representatives is delivered through course leadership teams. It was confirmed that training is delivered consistently across course groups and that representatives can informally seek advice on their role. While this largely addresses the recommendation, students indicated that they do not have an opportunity to engage in formal School-wide training events designed to develop their ability to interact with the School's formal decision-making processes.

8 Information on the academic appeal process is outlined clearly in course handbooks and aligned fully with the General Examination and Assessment Regulations published by the University of Brighton. The processes are discussed at Course Leader Meetings and cascaded down to respective course teams. Similarly, the School has introduced an assessment policy that aligns with those of the University. The policy is concise and contains the key features expected. At student level, the policy is supported by assignment briefs that clearly signpost key dates, the assessment aims and the learning outcomes to be achieved. Some students expressed that they would benefit from a breakdown of how marks are awarded against the various assessment elements that lead to the award of credit.

9 The School has published a statement to support its approach to enhancement, which clearly emphasises the focus placed on student and employer interaction to create enterprise opportunities, to build confidence and to enhance employment opportunities. This approach is supported fully by students and is a key feature of the School's value added proposition. However, the School has not yet developed a coherent strategy to implement its approach to enhancement that outlines the deliberate enhancement steps and associated measures of success.

10 The School has made significant progress in the development of a process for analysing, evaluating and acting on student data on retention and achievement. The approach to monitoring and review is both hierarchical and cyclical, and consequently appears robust, but has yet to be fully tested as an operational process. It is hierarchical in so much that it feeds from the bottom up, from module to course to School, with responsibility for each level mapped appropriately. It is cyclical in so much that it follows a defined time line of review to action plan and ultimately to periodic review with the awarding body. The process is supported by survey data, student metrics, module summary forms, external examiner reports and its meeting structure, with ultimate responsibility resting with the Academic Board. More recently the School's ability to record and analyse data has been enhanced by the requirement to report to the Higher Education Statistics Agency and participate in the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey for Specific Course Designation purposes. The School does not provide a course with a duration greater than a year, therefore is unable to participate in the National Student Survey. However, the School gathers similar statistics for its own internal monitoring purposes.

11 The School continues to operate a comprehensive and rigorous admissions process that is aligned to the Expectation of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*. Applicants whose first language is not English are required to achieve an overall International English Language Testing System score of 6.5 with no element being less than 6.5 for all entrants. Clear guidance is available on accredited prior learning for all programmes, which takes account of awarding body expectations. Students confirmed that information on admission requirements is clearly and accurately presented on web pages and in promotional material.

12 The School has developed and implemented an effective and coherent quality assurance system, which ensures that the Expectations of the Quality Code, *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning* and *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review* are met. In May 2016 the University of Brighton undertook a periodic five-year review of the programmes, which provided the School with an opportunity to undertake a comprehensive review of its higher education provision. The University approved the revalidation of the bachelor's with honours programme, and the existing diploma to a Diploma of Higher Education. Conditions set by the review panel have been met. Students confirmed that there are ample and appropriate mechanisms in place for them to engage with the School's quality assurance system, principally through end-of-module questionnaires.

13 Student achievement for the Interior Design Diploma (full-time) has dipped from 94 per cent in 2014-15 to 79 per cent in 2015-16. Staff attributed the fall to 12 students (19 per cent of 64 enrollments) discontinuing their studies for financial or personal reasons. Similarly, the blended learning delivery mode achievement data has been affected by seven student (from 13 entrants starting in January 2015) discontinuing their studies. Between 2013-15 the BA (Hons) Interior Design programme achieved a 100 per cent retention rate, with 10 students from the 12 enrollments achieving the award. From the 2015-16 intake of 25 students, six have discontinued their studies to date. The FdA Interior Design enrolled 25 students in 2015-16, of which 19 (76 per cent) remain on the programme. The School has developed a process for analysing, evaluating and acting on student retention and achievement data.

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

14 The School continues to use the Quality Code as a reference point to design policies and procedures for maintaining academic standards and quality. The School's awarding body, the University of Brighton, undertook a five-year periodic review of provision in May 2016 and approved the revalidation of the programmes. In addition, the School is a member of, or linked to, a range of professional bodies and associations that enable it to keep up to date with current thinking, research and developments in the interior design field.

#### **Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit**

15 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

16 The monitoring visit was carried out by Neil Lucas, Reviewer, and Grant Horsburgh, Coordinator, on 20 June 2017.

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