



Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd, December 2017

Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review panel concludes that Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd (the Academy) has made acceptable progress with implementing the action plan from the December 2016 [Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 Since the 2016 Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight (RSEO) visit, the Academy has reported no fundamental changes. The Academy has fully re-appraised its course provision, consistent with its 2016-18 Strategic Plan, following its relocation to new premises in Holborn. The Strategic Plan recognises that the UK's current immigration regulations preclude the registration of large numbers of Tier 4 students on one-semester programmes. The Academy is prioritising the short three-week Global Campus programmes. The one-semester Global Campus programme enrolled 42 students in September 2017, a significant increase from the intake of six students in 2016. From February 2018, the Academy is planning future intakes of up to 25 places for students from each of the four Limkokwing University faculties.

3 The undergraduate Global Campus programme has been reconfigured to a three-week, rather than a four-week, programme. Between September 2016 and June 2017 it attracted cohorts of between 40 and 73 students (318 students in total); the Academy plans to welcome up to 10 cohorts in future years. A new two-week postgraduate Global Campus programme was introduced in the 2017-18 academic year, the two cohorts of which attracted five and 10 students respectively, with the Academy planning to offer cohorts of between 15 and 25 students. The Academy is in the process of enhancing the provision offered in its English Language Club UK and extending its remit to assume oversight of English departments in Limkokwing University's other campuses.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The Academy has continued to build on the four areas of good practice identified in the 2016 RSEO report. The Vice-Chancellor has oversight of all academic matters at the Academy and is assisted at senior level by the Academic Coordinator, the Global University Campus Programme Manager and the Campus Operations Manager. The RSEO report was considered by the Limkokwing University senior management and Senate, which have oversight of any issues raised.

5 The good practice identified in the Academy's approach to the development, delivery and assessment of the Global Campus programme has been further enhanced by establishment of the postgraduate programme, which started in September 2017. This new model was developed by the Academy and approved by the Senate to attract master's and doctoral students who wish to develop their research, creative thinking and intellectual skills in London. The post-module review indicated a number of enhancement activities to be

adopted for future cohorts. The Limkokwing University senior management approved the Academy's proposal to reduce the length of the undergraduate Global Campus programme to three weeks. This approach is intended to enrich and broaden students' educational experience, and allow more intensive delivery over seven, rather than five, days per week. This change reduces the cost of the course, making it more attractive to students, particularly from the University's southern African campuses. Interest in this programme has increased significantly and 10 cohorts annually, rather than the current six, will be available in the future.

6 The Academy is establishing a collaborative partnership with the University of Northampton, in part to enable future Academy students to interact with those at a UK university through joint project work. Students reported that they appreciate the opportunity to mix with others from many countries through living in multi-institutional student accommodation in north London. They also commented favourably on the extensive Student Handbook, which includes comprehensive information on registration and enrolment, and guidance on the support available during their time in the UK. The Handbook contains policies and information on attendance, academic conduct (including guidance on plagiarism), special requirements, concerns and complaints, and fire and health and safety arrangements.

7 The good practice in the comprehensive pre-departure preparatory work undertaken with prospective students, in conjunction with the main campus, is reflected in staff interaction with applicants, and the web-based pre-departure arrangements. London-based staff now visit Limkokwing University in Malaysia more regularly to brief students on the London programme, and travel and living arrangements, a development that is welcomed by current students.

8 The Academy's good practice in its systematic and effective use of formal and informal contributions from senior industry representatives has been enhanced by a focus on the business start-up process, involving visits to the Social Enterprise Hub at Westminster. This activity has introduced students to website development and exposed them to concepts of urban farming, as part of an overall focus on social enterprise initiatives. The Academy continues its engagement with the London Fashion Week, enabling students to showcase their creative designs to leading names in the fashion world.

9 The Academy continues its good practice in ensuring that its web-based information is detailed and accurate. It complements this with mailshots to the parents of students expressing an interest in applying, and informal meetings with prospective students, each focusing on the career advantages of the programmes offered. Students attest to the accuracy, comprehensiveness, reliability and high quality of the pre-departure materials and briefing arrangements.

10 In responding to the desirable recommendation that staff performance appraisal is in all cases implemented in accordance with the University's Staff Development Policy, the Academy reported that it had not undertaken appraisals of full-time teaching staff, as two key staff had left the institution. However, from February 2018, the Academy plans to establish an annual programme of staff appraisal for all full-time staff and for part-time staff who have been appointed for at least two contractual terms. A programme of peer observation had been established, and faculty staff confirm the supportive and developmental nature of the process.

11 Admissions policies require English language competence based on a bachelor's degree from an English-speaking country or IELTS scores relevant to the level of the Limkokwing award. Prior qualifications are recognised if awarded by an internationally recognised institution or a national government agency approved by the Malaysian

Qualifications Agency. Students are additionally assessed by a personal statement and through interview. Students confirm that they apply initially to their home faculty, which passes applications to London to assess these for the likelihood of the applicant receiving a UK visa. Staff reported that 95 per cent of applications considered by the Academy are successful.

12 The Academy uses academic team meetings, boards of studies and examiners as its main monitoring arrangements, as well as student consultation and feedback. Academic team meetings are arranged on a 'needs must' basis, and are chaired by the Academic Coordinator. The meetings are attended by part-time staff, if available, and by visiting senior staff from Limkokwing University. A single Board of Studies covers all Academy programmes appropriate to the small numbers of students at the London campus and the curriculum overlap. The Board, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, comprises all faculty and appropriate administrative staff, and normally meets once per semester. Assignments for the semester programmes are set in Malaysia, although customised locally, and are marked initially by Academy staff, with Malaysian faculty acting as second markers. The London Campus Board of Examiners acts as a 'pre-Board' to the relevant faculty examination boards for semester-long modules. The Board of Studies considers detailed student profiles and sends the full results, with a sample of examination scripts and assignments, to relevant colleagues in Malaysia prior to the Limkokwing University Senate approving the results. A more streamlined arrangement operates for the Global Campus programmes, with the Academy's Board of Studies determining marks for confirmation in Malaysia.

13 Students complete an evaluation form for each module. These are reviewed by the Academic Coordinator, who identifies trends and key issues. The analysis of responses is summarised diagrammatically and is shared with teaching and administrative staff. Concerns about the quality of accommodation two years ago were cited as an example of the Academy responding quickly to student feedback. Additionally, student feedback is obtained informally and on a case-by-case basis, facilitated by the small numbers of students on the London campus and by a friendly, supportive ethos. Students report that staff are readily available in person or through email, and respond rapidly. Students cited a problem with the e-library as an example of an issue raised that was speedily resolved.

Section 4: Progress in working with the relevant external reference points relating to academic standards and quality for higher education

14 The main external reference point for the semester-long courses, all approved by the Limkokwing University Senate, continues to be the Qualifications Descriptors of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. The Academy employs faculty members with a range of experience of UK academic frameworks including the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and sector practices, although there are no formal arrangements for colleagues to share collectively from this experience. The Academy additionally benefits from the external input of industry-leading employers offering internships and work experience to semester students. The London campus additionally benefits from externality in curriculum design from industry advisers based at other Limkokwing campuses, who periodically visit the Academy.

15 The Academy intends to apply for British Council accreditation in January 2018 for its English language programmes and anticipates a review visit in April 2018. This is consistent with its plan to enhance the role of English language provision.

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 monitoring visit was carried out by Simon Ives, QAA Officer, and Professor Peter Bush, review panel member, on 5 December 2017.

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