



Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd

Recognition Scheme for Educational
Oversight Review by the Quality Assurance
Agency for Higher Education

December 2016

About this report

This is a report of a review under the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd. The review took place on 1 December 2016 and was conducted by a panel, as follows:

- Professor Peter Bush
- Professor Debbie Lockton.

The main purpose of the review was to:

- make judgements about the provider's delegated responsibilities for the management of quality and improvement of learning opportunities
- draw a conclusion about whether the provider's public information is reliable
- produce a commentary on how effectively the provider discharges its responsibilities for academic standards
- report on any features of good practice
- make recommendations for action.

A summary of the [key findings](#) can be found in the section starting on page 2. The [context](#) in which these findings should be interpreted is explained on page 3. [Explanations](#) of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 4.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.¹ More information about this the review method can be found in the [published handbook](#).²

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us.

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=202.

Key findings

The QAA panel considered evidence relating to the educational provision at Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd (the Academy), both information supplied in advance and evidence gathered during the visits of the review itself. The review has resulted in the key findings stated in this section.

Judgements

The QAA panel formed the following judgement about Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd.

- **confidence** can be placed in Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities.

The QAA review panel also concluded that Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners.

Conclusion about public information

The QAA panel concluded that:

- **reliance** can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the public information that Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd is responsible for publishing about itself.

Good practice

The QAA panel identified the following **features of good practice** at Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd:

- a rigorous approach is taken to the development, delivery, assessment and review of Global Campus programmes (paragraph 1.5)
- comprehensive pre-departure preparatory work is undertaken with prospective students, in conjunction with the main campus (paragraph 1.6)
- systematic and effective use is made of formal and informal contributions from senior representatives of industry (paragraph 2.3)
- detailed, accurate and highly valued public information is available on the website (paragraph 3.2).

Recommendations

The QAA panel makes the following **desirable** recommendation to Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd.

- ensure that its approach to staff performance appraisal is in all cases implemented in accordance with the University's Staff Development Policy (paragraph 2.8).

Context

Limkokwing University of Creative Technology Ltd is a private university with 12 campuses across three continents. It was established in Kuala Lumpur in 1991 as the Limkokwing Institute of Creative Technology and became the first private sector provider of higher education to be recognised as a university college by the Malaysian Government. On receiving university status from the Malaysian Government it changed its formal title to Limkokwing University of Creative Technology: in the absence of university title this also serves as a trading name in the United Kingdom.

The University's vision and mission are coherent and ambitious, and based on individual empowerment. Its academic portfolio is industry-focused, and the University takes particular pride in its state-of-the-art facilities, its innovative and stimulating provision, and its international and inclusive ethos.

In 2007 Limkokwing was the first Asian and the first Commonwealth University to establish a UK campus. While initially the large majority of students were international and taking programmes on Tier 4 visas, subsequent changes in visa regulations necessitated a strategic re-evaluation. Accordingly, in the UK Limkokwing currently focuses primarily on short courses, while retaining the future aim of facilitating longer term provision.

The University's degree courses are fully accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. The London campus's institutional quality management procedures and practices are closely monitored by the main campus in Malaysia. The Chief Executive of the London campus is also the University's Vice-Chancellor, and, as a University Vice-President, has responsibility for developing and assuring institutional policies on academic standards and quality across all campuses.

Detailed findings about Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd

1 Academic standards

How effectively does Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1 The University Senate, chaired by the President, has ultimate responsibility for academic standards, and for conferring degrees and diplomas. It delegates operational responsibilities to a suite of senior committees, including the Quality Assurance Board, the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Curriculum Development Board. Institutional academic standards, quality and curriculum management and delivery and assessment arrangements are codified in a comprehensive Quality Manual. While regulations and provisions (including the common awards structure, semester pattern, credit requirements, assessment methods, and learning outcomes for each award) are applicable to all campuses, some variation in assignments is permitted to facilitate local contextualisation. Separate examination question papers, all of which are subject to central approval, are prepared for each location.

1.2 The University Vice-Chancellor (one of eight Vice-Presidents) heads the UK campus (the Academy), and has responsibility for academic standards, day-to-day oversight resting with the Academic Coordinator. The Academy cites academic team meetings, the Board of Studies and the Board of Examiners as the main means of ensuring alignment with institutional requirements. Academic team meetings, formerly weekly, are now, given the reduction in student numbers following changes in UK visa regulations, arranged on a 'needs must' basis. For the same reason a single Board of Studies covering all programmes and attended by all lecturers, is now convened once each semester: its responsibilities include programme monitoring, considering proposed changes to module outlines, monitoring student progress and attendance, and monitoring staff performance. These arrangements appear effective.

1.3 The University's Global Campus programme allows students to spend a semester in Africa, a semester in Europe and a semester in Asia all on the same degree programme. The Academy is the focal point and academic hub for this programme, which is available to undergraduates and postgraduates on any Limkokwing campus in one of two forms. In the first form, students register for one semester in London, taking credit-bearing modules; alternatively they may take a London-based programme for two or four weeks, normally working in multidisciplinary teams on a credit-bearing real-life project. At the time of the review visit, 215 students were following Global campus courses on the semester that commenced in August 2016, with a further 43 commencing programmes in November 2016. 153 students were enrolled on Global Campus programmes in the semester beginning February 2016, and the Academy has projected 235 enrolments in the February 2017 semester: with no students taking undergraduate or postgraduate degrees the continuing success of Global Campus is business-critical for the Academy. While full quality procedures are not applicable to short programmes, London-based internal academic quality controls are in place, the Senate receives monthly reports and recommendations from boards of examiners, and a concise guide to internal quality processes, based on the detailed institutional Quality Manual, is provided to students. These arrangements appear proportional and fit for purpose.

1.4 The review panel examined evaluation forms completed by supervisors assessing the student performance, a student logbook sheet submitted monthly, a form stating student preferences of organisations, a student agreement form setting out the conduct expected,

a student agreement form, an organisational agreement form, and a form for students to evaluate their experience. These were appropriate in content and clearly expressed.

1.5 The Academy's development of Global Campus programmes is undertaken with the approval, and subject to the oversight, of the Vice-Chancellor. Programmes are subject to continuing and approved adjustments to meet the interests and backgrounds of different student cohorts. All curricula offer pathway options, though undergraduate curricula emphasise softer skills and links with industry, and postgraduate programmes place greater emphasis on entrepreneurial skills. The Academy's rigorous approach to the development, delivery, assessment and review of its Global Campus programmes is **good practice**.

1.6 Given the challenges involved in meeting the required learning outcomes of short programmes, particular care is taken with selection: applications are made to the University in Malaysia, and selection decisions are made on the basis of interview as well as application, with particular emphasis placed on applicants' individual potential to benefit, the relevance of the London experience to their degree programme, their understanding of, and enthusiasm for the experience, and the likelihood of their obtaining a visa. These procedures, combined with detailed pre-departure briefings which include ensuring that all students have a sound understanding of plagiarism avoidance and detection, aim to ensure that they are ready to commence their intensive, pre-planned study programmes almost immediately on arrival. The comprehensive pre-departure preparatory work undertaken with prospective students in conjunction with the main campus is **good practice**.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

1.7 The main external reference points in use are the Qualification Descriptors and learning outcomes prescribed by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency promulgated in 2011 through the Malaysian Qualifications Framework, to which all Malaysian higher education providers are subject. For Global Campus programmes Senate approval and rigorous selection procedures ensure their complementarity to degree programmes. The Academy cites also the benefits of employing academics with experience of UK reference points, and of its close involvement with employers through internships and work placements.

1.8 The Academy was accredited by the Accreditation Service for International Colleges (ASIC) in 2008 and re-accredited in 2014 for a further four years, the 2014 Accreditation report confirming the Academy as an ASIC Premier College, and commending it in areas which include course review and attention to analysing students' results. The Academy cited a number of other awards in its submission, and the review panel learned that the University as a whole has won over 200 awards internationally for creativity and innovation.

How effectively does Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd use external scrutiny of assessment processes to assure academic standards (where applicable)?

1.9 The University does not use external examiners, but all assignments are double marked in London, and a sample of marked scripts and assignments is sent to subject specialists on the main campus. The minutes of the Board of Examiners are comprehensive and provide detailed observations on individual student performance.

1.10 The Board of Examiners, attended by all relevant lecturers, academic support staff and an industry consultant, meets at semester end, and is informed by student marks and individual student report forms prepared by each lecturer. Recommended marks are sent to the main campus for Senate approval, along with the aforementioned samples for review.

The Academy does not have a formal policy on late submissions, though lecturers are authorised to apply a mark deduction, normally of five per cent, subject to ratification by the Board. Staff and lecturers informed the review panel that reports of Global Campus boards of examiners are thorough and appropriate.

The panel has concluded that Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd **satisfactorily manages** its responsibilities for academic standards in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

How effectively does Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd fulfil its responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1 The University's Technical Vocational Education Training Model of delivery for the creative industries has been recognised by the UK's Accreditation Services for International Colleges. The Academy's programmes reflect this emphasis: for example, many Global Campus programmes involve an internship, often assessments are based on real-life industry scenarios, students receive regular lectures from members of industry, and many examples exist of students gaining experience outside of their academic studies, for example a number of Fashion Forums for Young Designers and participation in The Malaysia Tech week.

2.2 A feature of the teaching and learning strategy is the individual mentoring and support made possible by small student numbers. In addition, although lecturers are part-time, they are normally appointed on a full-day basis, normally for at least two days a week when students are on-campus, and an academic is appointed as programme leader to oversee students' learning experience.

How effectively are external reference points used in monitoring and evaluation processes?

2.3 As noted previously (see paragraph 1.7), all programmes are accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. In addition, all student presentations are assessed by panels which include industry specialists; the Guidelines for Successful Delivery given to lecturers emphasise the desirability of deploying such specialists to talk to students and critique their work; the University's use of industry advisers to inform the curriculum is a facility from which the Academy draws acknowledged benefit; and employers contribute to programme development in their roles as internship supervisors and guest lecturers. The Academy's systematic and effective use of formal and informal contributions from senior representatives of industry is **good practice**.

How effectively does Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

2.4 The mechanisms by which the University assures itself that the quality of teaching and learning is maintained and enhanced include an end-of-module report developed by the Academy, which includes student results and evaluations, the effectiveness of the Teaching-Learning and Assessment Strategy, resources and student support, and staff development. For full-time students spending a minimum of one semester in London, a faculty leader is appointed to ensure all end-of-module reports are completed and proposed actions effectively communicated.

2.5 An annual course evaluation form requires the Academic Coordinator to report on actions taken following the previous year's report; to comment on teaching team and student feedback; to respond to moderation reports; to identify learning resource issues; and to produce an action plan. Completed reports are forwarded to the University Quality Committee.

How effectively does Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd assure itself that students are appropriately supported?

2.6 Every student completes a student appraisal form in week 10 or 11 for each module. While this form itself makes no specific reference to student support or learning resources, it invites comment on whether the student has felt cared for and offers a space for any free comments. The end-of-module report form completed by lecturers and submitted to the Academic Quality Committee does require comment on both student support and resources. Once the forms have been completed, the Academic Coordinator reviews them, extracting data, trends and views. Given the small numbers involved, informal feedback is also secured and both formal and informal feedback are considered at boards of study. Students told the panel that their feedback is promptly and effectively addressed.

How effective are Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd's arrangements for staff development in relation to maintaining and/or enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.7 The University's Lecturer Guidelines for Successful Delivery were the subject of staff development sessions in academic year 2011-12; the peer observation system encourages both parties to identify areas for development, and all staff have an opportunity to visit other campuses. In London, the Academy provides in-house staff development sessions which all staff are expected to attend: some, however, explained to the review panel that they take up the development opportunities offered by their professional association or industrial body in preference to those provided by the Academy.

2.8 The University's Staff Development Policy prioritises staff wishing to attend external development events for cascading to relevant colleagues, and those wishing to read for a higher degree. Staff performance appraisal is a requirement of the Staff Development Policy, and requires staff to provide a list of development activities completed in the previous 12 months. Since, however, not all staff who met the review panel appeared to have had such an appraisal, it is **desirable** that the Academy ensure that its approach to staff performance appraisal is in all cases implemented in accordance with the University's Staff Development Policy.

The panel has **confidence** that Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the learning opportunities it provides for students.

3 Public information

How effective are Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?

3.1 The University exercises control of the production of marketing and publicity materials, and the approval of the President's Office is required for London-based publicity information. Individual departments within the Academy prepare or propose new or revised information for consideration by the Academy's management team which in turn submits

draft proposals to the Centre for Content Creation in Malaysia, which engages with the Academy on detailed matters prior to seeking formal approval from the President's Office.

3.2 The Academy is promoted by publicly available information including websites, social media, materials such as the University Prospectus, single-page flyers, advertisements, educational fairs and the use of recruitment agents (such agents may be appointed by the Academy in a procedure which involves rigorous scrutiny, with continuing monitoring to assure alignment with the signed contract). The University's Centre for Content Creation is responsible for maintaining the University and Academy websites. The panel found both websites easily accessible, user friendly in presentation and comprehensive in scope. The detailed, accurate and highly-valued public information available on the website is **good practice**.

3.3 While fully familiar with the arrangements for the preparation and release of marketing and publicity information, it is the Academy's view that Academy-specific material would be further strengthened by a greater focus on UK market conditions in a context in which an institutional priority is to promote the University as an Asian and African institution. The Academy also drew attention to delays caused by the requirement to submit all proposals to Malaysia.

3.4 The Academy provides extensive information for students, including a general guide to the London campus and useful information on living in London, a specific campus user guide, a student accommodation guide, the induction programme, the Plagiarism Policy, and a comprehensive handbook with details of assessment methods and criteria, grades, special requirements, complaints procedures, and health and safety.

3.5 While most students who met the review panel had been made aware of the London courses during their degree programmes, a minority had applied to the University specifically to access the Academy's Global Campus offering: several expressed genuine excitement at the opportunities available to them in London. All students found the published information, in a variety of forms, comprehensive, accurate and reliable. They welcomed in particular the Global Campus information available from staff in Malaysia, the support provided there on the London application process (including information on visa regulations and procedures), and the guidance offered by visiting Academy staff on programme details and London life. Several observed that the published information somewhat undersold the benefits and reality of the Global Campus experience.

The panel concludes that **reliance can be placed** on the accuracy and completeness of the information that Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

4 Action plan³

Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd: action plan relating to the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight in December 2016						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review panel identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd.						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a rigorous approach is taken to the development, delivery, assessment and review of Global Campus programmes (paragraph 1.5). comprehensive pre-departure preparatory work is 	<p>Continue programme enhancement</p> <p>Cutting Edge industry relevant knowledge and practical learning</p> <p>Clarity and uniformity in assessment</p>	<p>Regular review of the programme</p> <p>Seek continuing input from industry and external reference points</p> <p>Constantly compare the programme outcomes with the programme learning objectives</p> <p>Reflect upon, and where appropriate, incorporate</p>	<p>Yearly</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>End of semester</p> <p>End of programme</p>	<p>Programme leader</p> <p>Academic Coordinator</p> <p>Academic Coordinator</p> <p>Global Campus Manager and Academic Coordinator</p> <p>Global Campus Manager</p>	<p>Academic Coordinator and Vice Chancellor</p> <p>Vice Chancellor and Campus Manager</p> <p>Vice Chancellor</p> <p>Vice Chancellor and Campus Manager</p>	<p>Annual course evaluation pro forma</p> <p>Regular industry meetings (Industry Forum)</p> <p>End of Module Report</p> <p>Feedback form</p> <p>Student satisfaction</p> <p>Feedback form</p>

³ Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan.

undertaken with prospective students, in conjunction with the main campus (paragraph 1.6).	<p>Student safety and welfare</p> <p>Minimise anxiety and cultural challenges</p> <p>Assurance to parents as to the safety and security of their sons and daughters</p>	<p>student feedback and suggestions</p> <p>Review and update the pre-departure information package and regularly communicate with coordinators in other campuses</p> <p>Reflect upon and incorporate parents feedback</p>	<p>Yearly</p> <p>End of programme</p>	Global Campus Manager	<p>Vice Chancellor and Campus Manager</p> <p>Vice Chancellor and Campus Manager</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> systematic and effective use is made of formal and informal contributions from senior representatives of industry (paragraph 2.3). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide up-to-date industry relevant knowledge and skills 	<p>Industry exposure such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> workshops industry visits industry speakers work placement/ internships 	Ongoing	Academic Coordinator and Global Campus Manager	Vice Chancellor and Campus Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student feedback form Industry feedback Graduate outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> detailed, accurate and highly-valued public information is available on the website (paragraph 3.2). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide accurate, valuable and quality information To support informed decision making Credibility and reliability 	Ongoing review, monitoring and following the approval process	Ongoing	Campus Manager	Vice Chancellor and Vice President	Approval process form and any complaints and feedback from the public

Desirable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date/s	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
<p>The panel considers that it would be desirable for Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd to:</p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that its approach to staff performance appraisal is in all cases implemented in accordance with the University's Staff Development Policy. 	<p>Staff motivation and Increased productivity</p> <p>Personal and professional development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentive Travel to other campuses Opportunities to play a wider institutional role Staff training and workshops Acknowledgement and recognition of good practices among staff 	<p>Yearly</p>	<p>Vice Chancellor with the assistance of Academic coordinator/ Campus manager</p>	<p>Senior Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff feedback Staff satisfaction Performance review

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary. More details and formal definitions of key terms can be found in the [handbook](#)⁴ for this review method.

Academic quality A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, higher education providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

Academic standards The standards set and maintained by degree-awarding bodies for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Credit(s) A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education programmes of study, expressed as 'numbers of credits' at a specific level.

Enhancement The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

Good practice A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

Learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcome What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

Programme (of study) An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Public information Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

Widening participation Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

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⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=202