



## Educational Oversight: report of the annual monitoring of London Bridge Business Academy Ltd, April 2019

### Outcome of the annual monitoring

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return, the review team concludes that the London Bridge Business Academy (the Academy) is making acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the February 2018 [monitoring visit](#).

### Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 There were 136 students studying on higher education programmes at the Academy in March 2019, compared with 122 in January 2018 as reported in the previous annual monitoring data return. The Academy employs a total of eight members of staff - two full-time and six part-time.

3 The Academy continues to offer the BTEC Higher National Diploma and Certificate in Business awarded by Pearson Education. Since the last monitoring visit, the Academy has phased out courses from *The Qualifications and Credit Framework* (QCF) and is now following the new *Regulated Qualifications Framework* (RQF) for its qualifications (paragraph 5). It underwent a Pearson BTEC academic management review in March 2018 and a Pearson confirmation visit in November 2018, achieving successful outcomes for both.

### Findings from the annual monitoring

4 The overall outcome of the monitoring report is that the Academy has continued to make acceptable progress in addressing the action plan, and all seven recommendations in the 2015 Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) have been completed. The Committee and associated progression alert list (PAL) work in tandem to support students to complete their programme of study by the expected end date and those on the list remain in regular communication with the Academy (paragraphs 5 and 6). Committee meetings are now scheduled in advance and dates are agreed with students to ensure maximum opportunity for student representative attendance (paragraph 7). The Academy continues to embed the consistent use of terminology in assessment board decisions, in line with BTEC centre guidance (paragraph 8) and the Committee continues to retain primary oversight and monitoring of quality assurance process, including assessment boards and internal review processes (paragraph 9). The late submission and extensions policy presented to the review team last year, which is appropriately designed, remains in place but its use has not to date been needed (paragraph 10).

5 To ensure that there is a clear formal plan expressed to enable students to complete their programme of study by the expected end date of their course, the Academy closely monitors and tracks students through the Committee and associated progression alert list (PAL). In the current academic year, the Academy has been phasing out *The Qualifications and Credit Framework* (QCF) qualifications and migrating them onto the new *Regulated Qualifications Framework* (RQF). All QCF students were permitted until the end of December 2018 to hand in any outstanding work to ensure final certification could be claimed by the Academy with the awarding body. The Academy's internal progression and

referral policy has been reviewed by the Committee in light of some QCF to RQF migration issues. The updated policy ensures closer monitoring of student progress, including effective use of the PAL, so that students at risk are supported and enabled to pass in a timely manner. Students identified on the PAL are offered more direct support and immediate help.

6 Students on the progression alert list (PAL) receive direct communication from the Academy regarding their status on the course. In the student representative report, students expressed how they are satisfied with communication practices between the academy and the student body, stating that the noticeboard remains the prime vehicle for sharing key information including results notification, deadlines, class schedules and urgent information. Emails are sent to students as the default for sharing urgent information.

7 The Academy continues to consult students in respect of the scheduling of formal Committee meetings to ensure maximum student participation. Once the schedule is agreed students are duly invited to attend. It is clear from Committee meeting minutes that students fully engage in the meetings, appropriately sharing the thoughts, opinions and observations of the student body regarding the items on the agenda and feeding back accordingly.

8 The Academy continues to embed a consistent use of terminology in assessment board decisions, in line with BTEC centre guidance. Assessment grades are recorded appropriately on a form, which is emailed to students at the end of each semester. External reports confirm no compliance issues and that the Academy is using consistent and appropriate terminology regarding assessment board decisions.

9 The Committee has primary oversight of the Academy's quality assurance processes and formally assess its own effectiveness on an annual basis to ensure all aspects of provision are reviewed and revised as necessary. The Committee specific review happens at the end of each academic year and is part of the entire Academy performance review (APR) mechanism that is mapped, managed and monitored in an extensive internal performance review database. The Committee reviews the Academy's action plan at each meeting, and minutes indicate actions required, by whom and within what timescale. Assessment boards continue to work effectively, with actions and outcomes of external examiner reports also noted and monitored accordingly by the Committee.

10 The Academy's revised policy in relation to the late submission of work and the granting of extensions has not yet been tested, but is appropriately designed and remains in place for first use.

11 The Academy has an admissions policy, which aligns with the Expectations of the Quality Code for Higher Education, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*. It sets out the stages of the admissions process, entry criteria and also meets the requirements of Pearson, the awarding organisation. Appropriate arrangements are in place to enable students with prior certificated and experiential learning to gain credit and the Academy has adopted Pearson's published recognition of prior learning policy and process in this respect. The Academy conscientiously engages with its awarding bodies to receive updates on changes to practice, for example, when Pearson made changes to the level of English required for students studying on their programmes. The Academy works with recruitment agents to make sure prospective students understand and have attained the appropriate entry-level qualifications prior to application.

12 The Committee acts as the formal vehicle to monitor and develop assessment practice at the Academy. External examiner reports confirm that appropriate internal verification and marking procedures are in place and that they are applied in a fair and consistent way. However, the external examiner noted that the Academy and its assessors should consider using awarding body templates in an attempt to further develop internal verification practice to make it more focused and robust. The external examiner also

commented that the feedback offered to students could be strengthened if detail was provided on why a student failed to achieve a higher grade and what they would need to do in future to improve the quality of their submissions. Training, advice and guidance had been provided to Academy staff on marking and feedback procedures where this issue was explored, and was expected to be applied to marking in future assessment sampling. The Academy responds appropriately to incidents of plagiarism and academic malpractice concerns. It provides an explicit definition of plagiarism for staff and students which is supported by a formal academic malpractice policy that clearly outlines penalties and sanctions applicable in instances where malpractice is identified and proven. The Academy also has a clear, user-friendly, stage-by-stage academic appeals procedure and associated, but separate, complaints procedure that aligns with the Quality Code for Higher Education - *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education* and *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*.

13 The student data return presents a combined 2019 completing cohort retention rate for the Pearson HND Diploma in Business of 92%. The previous year's combined cohort also achieved a 92% retention rate. The current 2018-19 cohorts have not yet completed their course, although provisional results for the February cohort indicate a pass rate of 76%. Pass rates remain complicated by the fact that awarding organisation regulations allow students to take up to five years to complete the programme. In addition, the migration of the programme from QCF to RQF frameworks has complicated matters further as late certification claims have been made by the Academy as discussed earlier in this report. The data is, therefore, not final. However, latest figures provided at the time of this report for the cohort of 57 students recruited in 2016-17 confirms that 41 have passed, with 16 students at the time of this report failing to achieve a pass, leading to an overall pass rate of 77%. This compares with an overall pass rate in the previous academic year of 51% and demonstrates a positive increase in pass rates for the Academy.

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

14 The Academy continues to use appropriate external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education, including those of *The Qualifications and Credit Framework*, the Quality Code for Higher Education, *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, the Pearson *BTEC Centre Guide to Assessment 2017-18, Levels 4 to 7* and the *BTEC Guide to Managing Quality 2017*. The Academy holds regular discussions and training sessions to ensure external reference points are used effectively. It takes part in its awarding body's annual academic management review (AMR) and in 2018 it was also subject to a Pearson confirmation visit, which concluded that the Academy had no compliance issues.

## **Background to the annual monitoring**

15 Annual monitoring 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 annual monitoring was carried out by Mr Mark Cooper, Reviewer, and Ms Helen Uglow, QAA Officer, in April 2019. No meetings were held with students or staff, and the conclusions presented in this report are based solely on analysis of documentary evidence submitted by the provider.

**QAA2385 - R10417 - Jun 19**

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2019  
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB  
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel 01452 557050  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)