



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of London School of Business and Management Ltd, September 2016

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 the London School of Business and Management Ltd (the School) has made commendable progress with implementing the action plan from the October 2015 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#) report.

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review visit

2 Since the QAA Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) in October 2015 (the Review), the School has taken a strategic decision to shift its course offer from Pearson HND Business to a suite of new, four year BA/LLB (Hons) programmes, including Foundation (Year 0), validated by the University of Northampton (the University). HND final recruitment was in September 2015. Recruitment to the BA (Hons) Business Management including Foundation Year programmes commenced in January 2016, with the other four year BA/LLB (Hons) including Foundation Year starting in September 2016. The School also delivers three year, two-year accelerated and one-year Top-up BA/LLB (Hons) programmes validated by the University. Subjects on offer are: Business and Management; Business Studies; Law and Business; Accounting and Finance; Accounting and Business; Computing Systems (Top Up); Law. There are currently 802 full-time equivalent (FTE) students on BA/LLB programmes.

3 There are currently 10 students at the School completing their MBA awarded through the University.

4 Since August 2016 there has been an increase in academic staff from 17.2 FTE to 19.8 FTE. An additional two staff have been employed in the Quality Department. The School has recently acquired the lease of 7, Bedford Square from Birkbeck College, to house the increased numbers of staff and a student IT Lab.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

5 The School continues to build on the features of good practice identified in the October 2015 Review report and all recommendations have been met (see paragraphs 9, 10 and 11). Progress on the two affirmations continues, with success indicators in relation to oversight of equality and diversity, and the quality and consistency of feedback, identified. The School has developed its own comprehensive institutional action plan that complements and enhances its intelligence-led and risk-informed approach to business and strategic planning. It carefully implements its quality assurance processes, making full use of qualitative and quantitative information, including the use of student completion and destination data, and makes very effective use of external reference points, including mapping of its policies against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code). The review team considers the School has proactively and systematically evaluated its

response to the recommendations and has successfully implemented and in some aspects exceeded expectations. The School has made commendable progress: all actions identified in the report of the 2015 review have been fully implemented and the School's management of its higher education offer has further improved as a result.

6 The School has successfully built on the features of good practice identified in the report from the 2015 Review report. The School has further enhanced its governance framework (Expectation A2) and has effectively built a robust deliberative structure which is clearly and fully documented, including clear roles for external academic input and Head of Student Guild representation on committees.

7 The School has continued to identify needs for improving teaching and learning and provide extensive support (Expectation B3). There is a clear strategy and support for improving teaching and learning, with key strategic documents (Teaching Learning and Assessment, Employability, and Research) contributing to a coherent and cohesive approach to enhancing learning. Actions are clearly ascribed to role-holders, success indicators are identified and there are reporting lines up to Academic Committee and Senior Management and Leadership Team. This has resulted in greater student satisfaction.

8 Effective teaching and learning and highly positive outcomes reflect the effective support mechanisms that enable students to develop their academic and personal potential and provide a seamless learning experience (Expectation B4).

9 The School has met in full all three recommendations from the 2015 report. The first was that the School should fully consult students when developing key strategic and management initiatives that impact on the quality of learning opportunities (Expectation B5). The review team considers that the College has made commendable progress in this area, not only in terms of gathering feedback to enhance the curriculum, and in the impact of student representation on quality enhancement, but also in the implementation of student input to programme specifications. The introduction of a regular Student Staff Consultative Forum is a commendable addition. Twice-weekly student representative drop-in sessions also enhance communication and complement formal committee structures.

10 The second recommendation from the 2015 report relates to the clarification of processes for making complaints and appeals in order to more effectively communicate these to staff and students (Expectation B9). The introduction of a new Part F of the Quality and Enhancement Manual was reported in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) and shared with students through course committees and student representatives. The Students Complaints Policy has been amended to take account of student rights to bring a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) if internal procedures have been exhausted. The School has completed and implemented the review, successfully putting in place coherent, and more transparent arrangements for processing complaints and appeals.

11 The third recommendation concerns the ways in which the School clearly articulates the difference between placement learning opportunities that contribute to the assessment of learning outcomes and those that are intended to enhance employability but are not assessed (Expectation B10). After extensive review and consultation the School has effectively delineated placement learning opportunities within its employability strategy, course handbooks, and the Student Guide to Employability. The review team also considers the School's employability strategy to be an example of commendable practice, particularly in relation to the embedding of personal development planning.

12 The School's new Admissions Policy came into force in February 2016. Recruitment, selection and admission are underpinned by a commitment to fair access (65 per cent of students are from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds and 20 per cent declare a disability). The function of student recruitment is explicitly separated from the making and administration of offers. Entry requirements for the BA/LLB programmes are approved by the University, with clear criteria around non-standard entry and English language competence. The admission of students meets the expectations set out in the Quality Code (Expectation B2).

13 As a result of re-evaluating its deliberative structures, the annual monitoring process is effectively incorporated into the revised governance and the annual resource planning cycles (Expectation B8). Additional staffing has enhanced academic quality provision. This has resulted in a clear and considered, strategy that places the enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities as paramount, and central to College structures and processes.

14 The School's data on student completion and achievement reflects the demographic characteristics of the student body, with a very high proportion of mature students from a BME background, and an above sector average declaring a disability. The School has acted on the relatively poor retention on the HND provision (between 62 per cent and 42 per cent on the last three cohorts) by shifting to the four-year BA/LLB with Year 0. Initial retention statistics on the degree programmes varies from 75 to 92 per cent. The four top-up programmes retain between 91 per cent and 100 per cent of students, with pass rates between 64 per cent and 94 per cent.

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

15 The School continues to make commendable progress in working with the Quality Code in a strengthened governance framework (Expectation A2) in which learning is foregrounded.

16 There is a strong partnership with the University which provides assurance of engagement with Subject Benchmark Statements and quality systems. Representation from the awarding body on the School's key Academic Committee and committee responsible for quality (QAEC) ensures external reference points are prominent. The School is increasingly engaged with the Higher Education Academy (HEA) Fellowship scheme, inspired by the institutional programme at Northampton, and the UK Professional Standards Framework informs peer observations.

17 External Examiner and Annual Management Reports from Pearson note good practice over the last year, including in relation to contextualised assignment briefs, high quality internal verification, well-developed procedures for the recognition of prior Learning (RPL) and recruitment and registration, as well as course handbooks which meet the Quality Code.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

18 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.

19 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr David Malachi (Reviewer) and Dr John Butcher (Coordinator) on 29 September 2016.

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