



## Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of London School of Commerce and IT Ltd, November 2017

### 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 Commerce and IT Ltd (the College) has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision from the November 2016 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

### 2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 There have been no major changes since the last QAA review in November 2016. The College has approval from Pearson (the awarding organisation) to offer seven higher education programmes, including a Diploma in Education and Training. The last cohort of students graduated in August 2016 having completed BTEC Higher National Diploma in Business and at the time of the monitoring visit there were no students enrolled on the programme. However, during the visit it was noted that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has notified the College that it has approval to recruit higher education students. As a consequence the College is working towards starting delivery of the Diploma in Education and Training in January 2018. The College employs four full-time senior staff and has identified three additional individuals who will be employed as academic staff to deliver the Diploma in Education and Training.

### 3 Findings from the monitoring visit

3 Following the HER (AP) in November 2016, the College developed an action plan, which included proposed enhancement activities to address matters discussed in the visit report. While all actions from the 2016 review have been completed (paragraphs 5 to 10), an evaluation of the effectiveness of these enhancements cannot be commented on as there are no higher education programmes on offer at the College, therefore revised policies and processes have not been fully implemented. Good practice continues to be embedded and enhanced through the delivery of all level 3 programmes (paragraph 4). Admissions processes, academic quality monitoring and review activities, and student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement, take full account of UK Quality Code for Higher Education Expectations (Quality Code) (paragraphs 11 and 12). Student completion and achievement data from the last higher education programme on offer during 2014-16 exceed sector expectations (paragraph 13).

4 The College continues to make effective use of a structured approach to detailed formative feedback on assessed work and independent learning plans to develop students identified as being at risk of failure. Subject tutors identify at-risk students through monitoring participation in class and through early assessment. An individual independent learning plan is developed for each student. The effectiveness of the process is monitored through the College recording participating student progression data centrally and through oversight of the process by the Dean. A development plan is in place to ensure that new academic staff starting in January 2018 have a clear understanding of the College assessment feedback expectations and the independent learning plans process.

5 As a means of ensuring that committee meeting minutes include full and accurate records of discussions the College arranged for the minute taker to attend an external training event for meeting administrators. Recent Academic Quality Enhancement Committee (AQEC) meeting minutes indicate that this recommendation has been fully met.

6 The College has developed an effective process for monitoring programme delivery which takes account of the Quality Code, *Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review* and awarding organisation expectations. The process includes input from tutors through discussion at course committees and from students through a College questionnaire. The course leader will use this information to develop an annual report for discussion at the AQEC. An action plan will then be agreed, the implementation of which will be monitored by the Dean and progress reported to subsequent AQEC meetings.

7 The College Academic Appeal Policy has been reviewed and now aligns with awarding organisation requirements. The main change to the policy is the removal of a financial penalty on students wishing to lodge an appeal. The development of the revised process took account of the Expectation of Quality Code, *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*. The appeals process is available through the College web pages and is explained to students during their induction.

8 The College undertook a comprehensive review of all policies and handbooks to ensure that these are aligned fully with current practice. The Dean is responsible for ensuring that all policies and handbooks are reviewed annually taking account of feedback from course committees and through environmental monitoring of awarding organisation and sector-wide policy changes. The Principal reviews proposed amendments to College policy before these are discussed at AQEC. Final approval of changes to College policy rests with the Chief Executive Officer. All College policies and handbooks were submitted for review by an independent external consultant in September 2017 and the resulting report was used by the College to inform its internal review process.

9 The College has developed and implemented a process to ensure secure timely oversight of information provided on its website, virtual learning environment (VLE) and social media platforms. The Student Welfare Officer monitors web, VLE and social media content and any inappropriate material as defined within the policy is notified to the Dean. The Student Welfare Officer maintains a log of inappropriate material and the Chief Executive Officer has authority to remove such material. While a disciplinary process for offenders is not in place, repeat offenders access to the web, VLE and social media can be blocked by the College. The policy is available through the College's website, student notice boards and is brought to students' attention during their induction.

10 As noted in paragraph 8, the College has contracted external consultants to ensure that academic planning and decision making are informed by independent expertise. Reports produced by them are discussed by AQEC and agreed changes to policy or practice added to the AQEC rolling action plan. The College is guided by its selection of higher education programmes by the availability of student funding and by demand from students locally. AQEC has agreed that future students will be provided with access to external verifier reports through the VLE.

11 The College has a comprehensive admissions process in place which is aligned to the Expectation of the Quality Code, *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*. Applicants for level 5 programmes whose first language is not English are required to achieve an overall International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 5.5 with no element being less than 5.5. Applicants for programmes at level 6 or above are required to achieve an overall IELTS score of 6.5 with no element being less than 6.5. Applicants are required to produce original documentary evidence to support previous

school and college learning and previous work experience and future career aspirations are taken into account during the admission process. Information on admission requirements is clearly and accurately presented on web pages and in promotional material.

12 As noted in paragraph 6, the College 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. Students are provided with appropriate mechanisms to enable them to engage with the College's quality assurance system, principally through end of module questionnaires and membership of course committees and the AQEC.

13 Completion and achievement rates for the last higher education programme offered by the College indicate that of 50 students enrolled in 2014-15, three (six per cent) did not complete the first year of the course. Of the 47 students continuing the course, two (four per cent) did not complete. Overall completion for the original cohort of 50 students was 90 per cent.

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

14 The College continues to use the Quality Code as a reference point to design policies and procedures for maintaining academic standards and quality. As noted in paragraph 8, the College has completed a review of all policies which are now mapped directly to relevant Quality Code Expectations. The College continues to work with and take full account of awarding organisation requirements. In June 2017 the College retained matrix Standard accreditation for its information, advice and guidance. The College is an accredited centre for the Association of Business Executives (ABE). However, as ABE programmes do not provide access to student funding, the College has decided not to renew this accreditation.

#### **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 Mr Simeon London, Reviewer, and Mr Grant Horsburgh, Coordinator, on 14 November 2017.

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