



Specific Course Designation: report of the monitoring visit of London School of Management Education Ltd, December 2018

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 Management Education Ltd (the School) is making acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the October 2017 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

Changes since the last QAA review/monitoring visit

2 The School continues to offer programmes leading to awards from Pearson Education. Since September 2016, its HND Business has been based on the Regulated Qualifications Framework, while the remaining programmes have been based on the Qualification and Credit Framework. In addition, the School has, in 2018, established a new set of programmes leading to the award of bachelor's degrees from the University of Chichester, in the fields of business management, and health and social care management. At the time of the visit, the School had 274 registered students, of whom 62 were enrolled on University of Chichester programmes and the remainder on Pearson programmes. The School has a total of 13 teaching staff, of whom seven are employed on a full-time basis and six on a part-time basis.

Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The School is progressing actions arising from the recommendations of the 2017 Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) (HER (AP)). All recommendations have been acted upon and further steps are being taken to establish communication lines, evaluative strategies and governance structures that will lead to informed management of the school's provision. The good practice in the context of individualised learning and the development of research activity continues to the benefit of both staff and students. Evaluation of the actions taken is ongoing. Of the six recommendations in the report of the HER (AP) in 2017, four are complete but further progress is required on those relating to strategic oversight of student support and to the analysis of trends in complaints and appeals.

4 The School has continued its good practice in supporting students through the application and admissions process. Students expressed positive views about the detailed and painstaking nature of the application process, about the thoroughness of interviews, and about the level and detail of information for applicants provided on the School's website.

5 In relation to its good practice in respect of inspiring a research community amongst its staff, the School has continued to support the development of staff capacity for research. The review team heard that about eight members of staff had taken part in research training in the past year, and that the School has continued to develop partnerships with universities with a view to furthering research and enabling students to make research proposals.

6 In response to the recommendation concerning anonymity of individual student information, the School has put in place practices to ensure confidentiality for students who are the subject of discussion in committee meetings. Minutes of Student Welfare and Attendance and Disciplinary meetings are now redacted to ensure confidentiality and are not publicly available. The School indicated that its Confidentiality Policy has been updated, principally to reflect new GDPR requirements and now reflect good practice. Evidence for the evaluation of the steps taken to address this recommendation was cited but this was inconclusive and related to the broader matter of student participation in school governance. The team questioned staff during the staff meeting and were satisfied that the School has made improvements in the way meetings are managed to ensure confidentiality of individuals when recording the discussions in minutes.

7 The School has responded to the recommendation relating to control of internal record keeping. In order to ensure the effective oversight of document revisions, the Version Control Policy has been updated and the new process is now being implemented. Staff cited examples of the revised process for updating documents and electronic materials and the new expectation that committee chairpersons sign off the final set of meeting minutes. The team examined a number of planning documents and reports where version control and sign off by Academic Board was clearly documented.

8 The School has made progress towards meeting the recommendation in relation to strategic oversight of student support, but its actions are not yet complete. It has introduced the Student Welfare Survey consulting students and staff during 2018 with a particular emphasis on gathering feedback on the adequacy of support for mental health issues. A careful analysis of the results of this survey has been carried out to inform a more strategic approach to the effective management of student support. Nine recommendations for action resulted from this survey. The team heard that further strategic action is now underway, but not yet complete, to prioritise actions, gain agreement for budgets from the Board of Directors and then, with oversight from Academic Board, implement and evaluate the actions identified.

9 In order to meet the recommendation relating to student engagement, the School has reviewed its Student Representative Handbook to extend roles for students in educational and decision-making processes. Meetings are scheduled during breaks in teaching and the School ensures that at least one student representative can attend each meeting. The School also ensures that feedback from these committees is provided to student class meetings by academic staff during taught sessions and at the end of each term. Students were positive about the way in which the School was inculcating a participatory culture among students in the management of their higher education experience.

10 With a view to ensuring oversight of trends in complaints and appeals, the School has established a Complaint Handling Committee and introduced a log book to support student meeting forms in order to ensure that all complaints made by students are captured. A Complaint Handling Review Report analyses the complaints and appeals received in 2017-18, noting that there were none of the latter; the report has been discussed by the new committee and staff informed the team that the School proposes that this review report will be conducted annually with recommendations for actions submitted to the Academic Board for agreement, action and evaluation. The recommendations within the Complaint Handling Review Report, together with suggestions for alternative routes to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, had not been considered by the Academic Board at the time of the visit. While the School has made considerable progress with the recommendation in relation to trends in complaints and appeals, there is insufficient evidence within Academic Board minutes to demonstrate a strategic response to analyses of complaints received. Evaluations have been carried out in relation to staff and student satisfaction with the Complaints Policy

and associated processes within the Staff Survey and Student Survey with both groups confirming their understanding of the policy and the latter indicating satisfaction with the School's response.

11 The School indicated that the annual enhancement priority for 2017-18 has been the improvement of facilities and extension of the premises which have taken place in the past year. The School's Strategic Plan identifies additional enhancement initiatives related to widening participation, employer engagement and student engagement and strategies to support progress in these contexts have been created. There is evidence of successful progress with the implementation of the widening participation strategy, and of evaluation of this progress. Progress with some of the strategic objectives in relation to employer engagement was evidenced by successful introduction of the Employer Forum; students reported satisfaction with the employment-related initiatives of the School which had resulted in subsequent engagement with relevant professionals relevant to their careers. In the context of student engagement, a detailed report with evaluation of progress has been produced by the School with action points which will now be considered and prioritised by the Board of Directors and Academic Board for implementation next year.

12 The Admissions Team and the School Principal maintain oversight of the admissions process and the School conducts an Interview and Admissions Analysis to evaluate current and inform future actions relating to the Widening Access and Participation Strategy, and the design of teaching strategies for each intake. The School's website provides detailed information policies and guidance to support students through each stage of the admissions process. Tests for students' aptitude and motivation are included in a thorough interview process and the consistency of the process is ensured via an interview checklist. Clear guidance on English Language requirements is provided on the School's website and within course brochures and programme specifications, and an additional test and the interviews are used to evaluate candidates' command of English. The individualised approach to considering student needs and circumstances highlighted as good practice in the 2017 HER (AP) has continued. The School has a clear understanding of how the admissions process is supporting access for students of different backgrounds and the School takes active steps to target under-represented groups.

13 Policy and procedure relating to Pearson assessments are presented on the School's website and in the General Student Handbook. University of Chichester programmes will follow the University's Assessment Policy and Procedures. External Moderators confirm that programme-specific assessment strategies, which focus on coursework, address the learning outcomes, reflect assessment criteria which are identified by the awarding bodies and are fair and consistent. Internal verification of assignments is carried out by School staff at standardisation meetings in accordance with the Moderation Policy and confirmed by the awarding body's External Verifier via online reports. External Moderator recommendations are noted and acted upon with oversight of progress maintained by Academic Board.

14 Students and staff confirmed that the School's Academic Misconduct Policy is clear. In addition to mitigating against plagiarism by providing a range of assessment tasks, academic skills sessions provide guidance on referencing to help students to avoid misconduct. Students were positive about their experiences of assessment. The team heard from staff that the report on academic misconduct for 2017-18 will be considered by the Academic Board.

15 A total of 56 students enrolled on programmes which they were expected to complete during the year 2017-18, of which 10 were on the HND Business programme, 12 on the HND Health and Social Care and 34 on the Diploma in Education and Training. Of these, 38 (68%) had gained the qualification for which they were enrolled by October

2018, while a further 13 (23%) were continuing their programme of study. The numbers of students who had gained each qualification were 7 (70%), 11 (92%) and 20 (69%) for the HND Business, the HND Health and Social Care and the Diploma in Education and Training respectively.

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

16 The School has carried out a gap analysis of its provision against *Chapters B5, B6, B7, B8 and B9* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. This has led to strengthening of its student engagement policy and assessment policy and has informed the development of action plans at departmental level. In the most recent annual staff survey, a majority of staff indicated that the use of the Quality Code has increased their knowledge of UK standards for higher education.

17 The School has engaged with the University of Chichester's process for partner approval with a view to ensuring that it is in a position to implement the University's policies and processes in respect of the assurance of standards and quality in the delivery of programmes leading to the award of degrees by the University. Following the meeting of the University's approval panel in May 2018, the School has satisfactorily fulfilled the University's conditions on approval.

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 Dr Elizabeth Smith, Reviewer, and Dr Stephen Ryrie, QAA Officer, on 18 December 2018.

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