



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Mont Rose College of Management and Sciences Ltd, October, 2018

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

2 Changes since the last QAA review

2 The College delivers Pearson Higher National Diploma awards in business marketing, hospitality management, accounting and finance, and health and social care management, as well as a Diploma in Education and Training. The College also delivers full degree and level 6 top-up programmes in accounting and finance, business management and international hospitality management awarded by Buckinghamshire New University (the University).

3 Since the last QAA review the College has acquired new premises at Gants Hill in Ilford. The building will provide teaching, learning and administrative facilities and is expected to be ready for use early in 2019.

4 The number of teaching staff has increased from 21 to 29 since the review in 2017. Fourteen members of staff are full-time. There are 1,208 full-time students, an increase from 950 at the previous review in 2017.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

5 All actions arising from the 2017 review have been fully implemented and the College demonstrates thorough engagement with a range of relevant external reference points to support and enhance academic standards and teaching quality. The good practice identified in 2017 has been maintained and extended. Staff development and engagement in research and scholarly activity continue to be supported and have been enhanced through the establishment of a research centre (paragraph 6). The College has maintained its commitment to continuous improvement through the sharing of best practice across teaching teams (paragraph 7) and staff and student contributions to the in-house Journal of Academic Reviews (paragraph 8). Innovative processes to develop students' academic skills and subject knowledge identified in 2017 have been further developed in 2018 through the introduction of a supported business plan competition for students (paragraph 8). The virtual learning environment (VLE) has been further developed to host an accessible and informative employability platform to assist students in gaining skills for employment (paragraph 9). Extensive mechanisms are in place to involve students at all levels as partners in the enhancement of their educational experience (paragraph 10). The single recommendation from the 2017 review has been fully implemented with the development of an accessible admissions appeals and complaints policy (paragraph 11).

6 The College has established a research centre with the intention of developing research projects in collaboration with the University to further improve support for staff development and engagement. The College's established Journal of Academic Reviews also effectively promotes the development of a research culture and provides opportunities for staff and students to develop a peer reviewed portfolio. Staff and students are positive about the impact of such research on teaching, learning community and staff career progression. The College is continuing to sponsor staff to undertake a level 3 certificate in assessing vocational achievement as part of its commitment to continuous professional development.

7 The College uses a best teaching practice template to promote continuous improvement across teaching teams. Staff complete the template at the end of each semester, reflecting on their teaching and identifying areas of good practice they wish to share with others. An overarching report on best practice is then discussed at team meetings. The sharing of best practice is also promoted through a systematic programme of peer teaching observations. Students take part in these observations, ensuring a fully rounded review of teaching and learning practice.

8 The strategic and innovative processes implemented by the College continue to enable students' progression and enhance their academic skills and subject knowledge. For example, since the last review the College has run a business plan competition as part of its MRC Angels programme, linking students with industry professionals who acted as mentors. The competition winner received a cash prize and access to a serviced office to assist their start-up venture. Students who met the team were enthusiastic about the experience of taking part in the competition and confirmed its value to their personal, professional and academic development. The College is also active in supporting students as researchers. Through its institutional membership of the Council for Hospitality Management the College provided an opportunity for an HND student to present a paper at the Council's research conference in May 2018.

9 The College has continued to develop the employability skills of students through its Employability Platform, which is available on the VLE and provides guidance on updating CVs, preparing for interviews, interview skills and job opportunities. Students who met the team described this as an easily accessible and informative part of the College VLE. Students also benefit from attending CV writing workshops and the contributions from guest speakers from business on their programmes of study.

10 To further develop its commitment to involving students as partners, the College has embedded the student voice in its committees, class observations and staff recruitment activities. Students describe a clear sense of community and staff regard student involvement on committees as a key development. Opportunities for students to collaborate with staff in research projects and publish their work in the College's Journal of Academic Reviews further embeds an ethos of students as partners in their learning and enhancement of the educational experience.

11 Following the recommendation from the 2017 review to ensure access to a formal admissions appeals and complaints policy for prospective students, the College has approved an Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy that students can access on the website. The policy contains detailed procedures aligned to the Code of Practice which are managed by the Head of Admissions. No appeals have yet been received by the College.

12 The College has a detailed Admissions Policy and robust admissions procedures, The Policy was further updated in 2018 to include students' rights to appeal. The College does not use agents in the recruitment of students but makes extensive use of introductions from existing students through the 'recommend a friend scheme' and through social media marketing. Admission to programmes is managed by the admissions team coordinated by

the admissions manager. The College works in partnership with the University on admissions to awards of the University.

13 The College requires English language competency in line with the Common European Framework of Reference. It also uses UKNARIC to determine the equivalence of non-UK qualifications and 41 per cent of students have non-UK qualifications. The College has a recognition of prior learning policy but has not yet needed to use it.

14 Admissions processes now include revised and strengthened interview questions for prospective HND and Foundation Year students to assess potential, ability and intention to study. Further changes have been made to improve the admissions process by including a member of the admissions team in interviews. Admissions to University programmes are currently managed through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and the College plans to extend this to all its programmes in the future. The College has introduced an introduction to study programme for successful applicants to equip them with writing, referencing and IT skills before the commencement of their programme. Students who met the team were very clear about the excellent support and information they received during the admissions process but also the rigour applied by the College to implementing the admissions policy.

15 A range of policies underpin the College's resolve to establish good practice in all aspects of assessment. Module Delivery Reviews record and promote classroom innovations. The Quality Assurance Manager oversees this process with the Assessment Board taking institutional responsibility.

16 To ensure assessment is rigorous and has integrity, all new staff receive an induction into college assessment and marking processes, accompanied by supporting paperwork and policies. There is a clear process of internal verification that aligns with Pearson requirements and staff are clear about its implementation. College staff also liaise with staff from the University on arrangements for marking and assessment. External examiners are appointed by Pearson and the University and formally constituted assessment boards confirm assessment decisions.

17 Staff and students are informed of the academic malpractice policy. Students submit all written work through plagiarism-detection software and the internal verification process requires staff to make comment on scores. The internal verification process also ensures that the process for collecting student assessed work aligns with the College's data protection policy. External examiners' reports confirm that the College's assessment processes are sound.

18 The College monitors and analyses data regularly and systematically through the year. Retention for students on the two-year HND programmes due to complete their study in 2018-19 is 84 per cent compared to 86 per cent for those who completed in 2017-18. The pass rate for those completing in 2017-18 is 84 per cent. For students on the one year level 6 'top-up' awards, retention is 95 per cent for those completing in 2017-18 and 81 per cent for 2016-17. The pass rate for students completing in 2016-17 is 75 per cent. Retention on the Diploma in Education and Training for students who completed in 2017-18 is 71 per cent with a pass rate of 65 per cent. Staff who met the team explained that the comparatively lower pass rate on the Diploma course is due to delays in students finding suitable teaching placements. Student attendance is monitored and there is a variety of mechanisms in place to identify and support students at risk of leaving or failing.

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

19 The College demonstrates highly effective engagement with relevant external reference points and bases its quality assurance and enhancement processes on the Expectations and the indicators of sound practice within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code). Since the last review the College has continued to review and develop its policies in line with the Quality Code. The College is supported by its awarding partners, Pearson and the University, whose programme specifications and regulatory frameworks ensure that programme design and delivery aligns with the FHEQ, relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and the Quality Code.

20 Since the last review the College has continued to update and develop policies to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, including responding to the requirements of registration with the Office for Students (OfS) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The College strives to ensure that students' learning is informed by best practice and uses guest speakers and mentors from industry to enhance knowledge and skills development. The College is working with the University to further improve engagement with employers and industry specialists.

5 Background to the monitoring visit

21 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.

22 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Mark Langley, Reviewer, and Dr Judith Foreman, QAA Officer, on 24 October 2018.

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