



Educational Oversight for embedded colleges: report of the monitoring visit of CEG UFP Ltd, February 2017

ONCAMPUS Amsterdam

1 Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the monitoring team concludes that ONCAMPUS Amsterdam is making **commendable** progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [previous monitoring visit](#).

2 Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 Overall student numbers registered on programmes at this Centre in September 2016 and January 2017 are higher than those for 2015-16, having increased by approximately 60 students. The Centre has seven management staff, and 14 academic staff on full or part-time contracts. During the last year a Deputy Head of Centre and an additional administrative assistant have been appointed. The current staffing establishment is slightly higher than that for 2015-16.

3 Programmes offered by the Centre are unchanged since the monitoring visit in December 2014. The Centre continues to offer an Undergraduate Foundation Programme (UFP) in Business and Economics, with an additional pathway in Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics (PPLE). The programmes are approved by the University and include the introduction of an additional Accounting and Finance module for Business pathway students. Students are now able to progress to programmes in the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, in addition to those of the University of Amsterdam. Discussions were beginning with the University about a possible Arts Foundation programme for entry in 2018.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The monitoring visit in December 2014 found that ONCAMPUS Amsterdam had made commendable progress in implementing the action plan following the review visit. The monitoring report found ONCAMPUS Amsterdam working with CEG centrally to further the good practice identified in the December 2013 review report, namely in relation to the quality of information and guidance for prospective students, and the joint marketing initiatives between the Centre and the University. The strong working relationship with the University was identified as centre-specific good practice in 2013 and has been continued and enhanced. Examples included staff from the University meeting the students, a taster day for students on the PPLE programme and regular meetings between key academic, operations and admissions staff.

5 The 2013 CEG review report identified three advisable and three desirable recommendations. The December 2014 monitoring report identified progress in relation to all these recommendations. There has been continuing progress since the last monitoring visit and actions have led to improvements in the Embedded College's management of its higher education provision. This has included feedback from the Head of Centre on matters raised at the Learning and Teaching Committee, including CPD sessions, the strengthening of the personal tutorial system with the identification of any at-risk students following early assessments, and the development of a strong student representative system. Students whom the monitoring team met confirmed that they had been able to raise a number of issues, which the Centre had been able to address. There are 13 representatives who meet with staff fortnightly.

6 ONCAMPUS operates a system of Centre Academic Oversight Audits. These involve preparatory-desk based investigations, followed by a visit to the Centre. The Amsterdam Centre was subject to an Oversight Audit in July 2016. The audit examined aspects of academic quality, particularly in relation to the assessment process and student motivation. The audit team also considered any operational matters and made a judgement. In both areas the Centre was given a green rating. The audit team noted that there had been a very successful CPD session on formative assessment. Staff in the Centre had been concerned about the revised assessment regime in the new UFP. As a consequence they had introduced a new formative examination, held under formal examination conditions. One recommendation made in the audit report was that the newly promoted members of the management team undertake the quality training programme on Moodle. All actions from the provider's own audit are on target for completion, and progress towards achieving them was evident.

7 Recruitment and admission of students is undertaken centrally by the ONCAMPUS Central Admissions Team, with agents acting as the main conduit for recruitment, and admissions requirements devised with university partners and regularly reviewed. The students whom the monitoring team met had either been recruited through agents or had found the centre through personal research. Students indicated satisfaction with the admissions process, and reported that the information received was both reliable and accurate.

8 Programmes offered at ONCAMPUS Amsterdam are the standard programmes with local enhancements, devised centrally by ONCAMPUS, and for which the monitoring and review are central activities. Annual monitoring of these programmes for 2015-16 was comprehensive, including student progression and performance, curriculum delivery, engagement with partner, quality of provision, student support, marketing, English language provision and student engagement.

9 The ONCAMPUS Academic Quality Assurance Manual lists a number of ways in which students are engaged with quality assurance and enhancement. These include surveys and student representation on staff-student consultation committees within each centre. ONCAMPUS has identified poor completion rates of surveys and the quality and value of responses as a problem. While efforts have been made to improve survey effectiveness, the decision was taken to terminate the end-of-module surveys from September 2016 onwards, replacing them with 'guided questions' in the staff-student committee to obtain student views about modules. Students confirmed that they had the opportunity to raise issues arising from the delivery of modules. Students felt that the Centre was responsive to any issues they raised.

10 ONCAMPUS Amsterdam reports pass rates on the basis of students who are successful as a percentage of the students who complete their programme of studies. On this

basis the UFP pass rate of 83 per cent in 2015-16 was higher than the 74 per cent for 2014-15, which indicates that the introduction of the new UFP programme in 2015-16 had achieved a significant overall improvement in the UFP pass rate. Of the students passing the UFP, 66 progressed to the University of Amsterdam, the others progressing to other Dutch universities and some to UK, USA and Canadian universities. Students progressing to the PPLE programme are required to meet higher entry standards. This is made very clear to students in both published and oral forms and students met by the team were clear about the requirements.

11 ONCAMPUS Amsterdam is making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the previous monitoring visit, with good progress being achieved in all the main areas of its operations. All actions identified by previous monitoring reports for ONCAMPUS Amsterdam have now been closed off and progress towards achieving subsequent self-identified actions shows demonstrable progress.

4 The embedded colleges' use of external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education

12 The ONCAMPUS Quality Assurance Manual has been fully mapped to the relevant Expectations in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. ONCAMPUS has also developed an online training programme to support awareness of the Quality Code. This has initially been released to centre management teams and programme leaders but, after evaluation of this initial phase, it will be rolled out to all ONCAMPUS staff at the end of the spring term 2017.

5 Background to the monitoring visit

13 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's and its embedded colleges' 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 and its embedded colleges of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

14 The monitoring visit was carried out by Cameron Waitt, QAA Officer, and Professor Alan Jago, QAA Reviewer, on 2 February 2017.

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