



Educational Oversight for embedded colleges: report of the monitoring visit of CEG UFP Ltd ONCAMPUS, February 2019

ONCAMPUS Reading

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 Reading (the Centre) is making acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the previous March 2018 [Higher Education Review \(Embedded Colleges\)](#).

Changes since the last QAA review

2 ONCAMPUS Reading is in its second year of operation. Overall student numbers remain low but stable. In addition to the Undergraduate Foundation Programme (UFP) in Arts and Design, a small group of students are now studying on a Master's Foundation Programme (MFP) in the same subject area. A second MFP pathway in economics has not recruited this year.

3 The Centre continues to operate from the London Road campus of the University. In addition to its two existing classrooms, a room has been furnished as a studio for practical art work. Centre staff and students are associate members of the University with limited access to facilities.

Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The review team concluded that the Centre is making acceptable progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its provision. This conclusion was reached after reading the action plan drawn up following the 2018 Higher Education Review (HER (EC)) and discussing its implementation with staff and students.

5 The HER (EC) made one recommendation - to work with the CEG ONCAMPUS marketing team to ensure that centrally-produced information is accurately customised and fully applicable to the Centre. The recommendation was based on the review's findings relating to the use of the QAA logo; implied levels of student access to University facilities; and the omission of information about additional costs for materials. There were no affirmations. The 2018 HER (EC) also identified a feature of good practice in the highly-personalised approach to learning and teaching that supports individual student needs and achievement.

6 Actions have been taken with respect to both the recommendation and building on the feature of good practice. The Centre has developed a combined action plan as a response to the HER (EC) and the annual monitoring report of the UFP. A further action plan has been developed in response to the CEG ONCAMPUS internal academic quality audit, which is discussed below.

7 Concerning accuracy of public information, meetings have been held with the CEG ONCAMPUS marketing team and drafts of the new brochure and publicity have been approved by internal stakeholders and the University. Students who met the review team confirmed that they had been informed in writing of additional costs for materials. In order to build on the good practice identified in the review, staff have arranged more one-to-one meetings with students to provide individual academic support and advice as well as to gather feedback from students on their experience. Action has been taken in response to feedback from students and the external examiner. As noted above, teaching space and facilities have been improved and action has also been taken to improve assessment practice and the use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) to support teaching.

8 The CEG Central Quality Audit conducted towards the end of the last calendar year, gave the Centre an amber RAG (the red-amber-green traffic light system) rating. Issues identified included the need for further staff induction and technical problems with student use of the VLE. Both issues have been addressed. A further issue concerned access to University resources, particularly the library, which is the subject of continuing discussions with the University. The present agreement between ONCAMPUS Reading and the University lasts until 2021. In the meantime, ONCAMPUS is focusing on strengthening links with the University and the destination departments for its students.

9 The Centre has developed an enhancement strategy which describes processes for identifying enhancement opportunities, ways of taking them forward and opportunities for identifying and enhancing good practice. The approach taken to implementation is one of continuous improvement, in particular responding to staff and student feedback. Student opinion is elicited through surveys, a suggestion box, meetings with student representatives, and an open-door policy which encourages all students to express their views. Students who met the review team stated that the Centre actively sought their opinions and listened to them. The review team was made aware of examples of improvements made as a result of student feedback.

10 The review team concluded that the Centre has transparent, reliable and valid admissions processes. Recruitment, selection and admission of students are undertaken centrally by CEG Central Admissions who work with a network of agents. Although a centralised process, the Centre is involved in admissions in various ways. Academic entrance requirements are agreed between the Centre and the University and notified to Central Admissions. These are published on the web and in centrally generated brochures. Skype interviews with local staff are used during admission if appropriate. The Centre is consulted on borderline applications and a decision on their suitability is made by the Head of Centre, in consultation with tutors and, if appropriate, the University. The Centre is confident that, as a result of careful consideration of borderline applicants, it only admits students capable of completing their programmes satisfactorily. The Centre is responsible for providing information and welcome packs to students who have accepted offers of places. Student documents are checked on arrival at Reading. Students who met the review team expressed satisfaction with the admissions process, stating that it was smooth and effective, and that they had been well-informed throughout.

11 The review team concluded that the Centre operates assessment policies that are rigorous and fair. Assessment is centrally led by subject and pathway leaders whose role extends across all ONCAMPUS provision including that delivered at Reading. Common summative assessments are undertaken across ONCAMPUS. Standard templates are provided

for submission and recording of marks. Assessment and assessment-related policies, processes and procedures are set out in the CEG Quality Manual.

12 Staff at the Centre are involved in assessment in a variety of ways. Draft summative assessments are discussed at Subject Group meetings. Formative assessments are developed both centrally and by local teachers. Marking is undertaken locally within the framework for standardisation and moderation set out in the Quality Manual. Feedback to students on formative assessments is provided by the staff at the Centre. Assignments may be submitted electronically using plagiarism-detection software. Staff training has taken place on assessment, marking and feedback to address issues raised by external examiners. Assessment is discussed at internal staff meetings. Students who met the review team indicated that they were clear about what was expected of them and how their work would be marked. They also stated that the feedback they received was timely and helpful; and that they were well-briefed on how to avoid plagiarism.

13 No external reviews of the Centre's provision have taken place since the last HER (EC).

14 Completion and pass rates are very high, but fewer than half of successful students' progress to the University. Those who do not progress to the University are attracted by a broad range of options available elsewhere. To address this problem, the Centre is increasing the opportunities students have for contact with the University and giving more advice and support in personal tutorials.

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

15 The Centre demonstrates appropriate engagement with relevant external reference points. The requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications* (FHEQ) and other relevant external frameworks are reflected in the regulations, policies and procedures set out in the ONCAMPUS Quality Manual. The Quality Manual, in turn, informs practice at ONCAMPUS Reading. ONCAMPUS centrally appoints external examiners whose reports are shared with ONCAMPUS Reading staff, analysed in annual monitoring reports and appropriate actions taken.

16 Staff are made aware of expectations for quality and standards by subject leaders, through learning and teaching events, continuing professional development and have online access to the ONCAMPUS Quality Manual. In response to recommendations made in the last ONCAMPUS Academic Oversight report, meetings have been held to familiarise staff with the wider ONCAMPUS framework including the role of the Quality Manual. Staff who met the review team were aware of key external reference points such as Subject Benchmark Statements, and their relevance to quality and standards.

Background to the monitoring visit

17 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.

18 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Phil Markey, QAA Officer, and Dr Carol Vielba, QAA Reviewer, on 6 February 2019.

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