



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

ONCAMPUS Sunderland

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

Changes since the last QAA review

2 The overall number of students at the Centre remains stable. Undergraduate Foundation Programme (UFP) numbers have grown further and now account for over 80 per cent of all students. While International Year One (IY1) numbers continue to decline, the quality of the student experience is maintained through joint teaching with students on the Master's Foundation Programme (MFP). There have been no significant staffing changes in the past year. Turnover of sessional staff has provided opportunities to benefit from new ideas and perspectives. The Centre continues to operate from the Johnson Building on the City Campus of the University. Before the start of the next academic year, the Centre is scheduled to move to appropriately designed premises adjacent to the Business School on the Sir Tom Cowie Campus situated by the riverside.

Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The Centre is making commendable progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its provision. The Centre Head maintains a master list of proposed actions derived from internal reviews such as annual monitoring, and responses to external reviews, including the 2018 Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) (HER (EC)). While the review made no recommendations or affirmations, the team identified an area of good practice in the highly-personalised approach to learning and teaching that supports individual student needs and achievement.

4 An Action Plan to develop the identified good practice further, and share it across ONCAMPUS and with the University, has been developed. As part of the Action Plan, management lesson observations have taken place and peer observations have begun. Staff meetings and continuing professional development have focused on developing a holistic approach to student wellbeing. Joint training with the University on mental health issues is planned. A joint plan for student engagement has also been developed with the University. Good practice identified at the Centre has been shared across the ONCAMPUS network at the CEG Teaching and Learning Conference in Amsterdam and at national committee meetings.

5 The Action Plan includes clearly defined intended outcomes and the means by which their achievement will be evaluated. It is too early to measure the full impact of actions taken, but the plan is on target and demonstrable progress is evident. Students who met the review team were positive about the support available to complete their studies successfully and felt they were able to raise issues with the Centre (paragraph 7). Effective student support remains a strong feature of the Centre and is reflected in overall student performance and achievement, particularly of those entering with lower qualifications.

6 During the past year internal reviews have taken place of provision at the Centre. The CEG Central Quality Audit gave the college a green RAG (the red-amber-green traffic light system) rating. The report identified good practice in relation to teaching of writing skills. Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) summarise the action taken with respect to the previous year's action plan and propose further actions. Peer review of AMR within ONCAMPUS provides critical comment on the reviews and proposed actions. Peer review of the 2017-18 AMRs at the Centre noted that previous action plans had been fully and effectively addressed. The review also suggested undertaking further comparative analysis of outcomes on individual pathways and modules in order to gain a fuller understanding of student performance and opportunities for enhancement.

7 The Centre seeks to involve students in continuous improvement and enhancement of its provision. Student opinion is elicited through end of module surveys, 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 a number of examples of changes made as a result of student feedback, such as providing more information about how assignments are marked; improving timetables; and organising an event for UFP students about progression and careers. The Action Plan identified improved student engagement in quality processes and the college as desirable outcomes to be achieved through student feedback, work with student representative committees and student forums, as well as working with the University and its Students' Union. Work is continuing to strengthen these links.

8 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. On arrival, student documents are checked by the Student Recruitment and Support Officer. 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.

9 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 Sunderland. 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 ONCAMPUS Quality Manual.

10 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. Wherever possible, assignments are submitted electronically using plagiarism-detection software. Staff training has taken place on assessment, marking and feedback. 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.

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

12 Pass rates for both programmes are high and above target but vary between pathways. Engineering students on the UFP struggle with aspects of the programme, (see paragraph 5) as do some students on the extended MFP programme, which caters for students with lower language levels on entry. Progression rates to the University are very high. The University accepts marginal fails which allows more students to progress.

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

13 The Centre demonstrates highly-effective 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 frameworks are reflected in the regulations, policies and procedures set out in the ONCAMPUS Quality Manual, which in turn informs practice at the Centre. Staff demonstrated an awareness of the Quality Code and how it had been embedded in the ONCAMPUS Quality Manual. ONCAMPUS centrally appoints external examiners whose reports are shared with the Centre staff, analysed in annual monitoring reports, and appropriate action taken.

14 Staff are made aware of expectations for quality and standards by subject leaders, through learning and teaching events, CPD, and have online access to the ONCAMPUS Quality Manual. The Centre staff also undertake CPD with the University, for example, concerning expectations for safeguarding. Sharing of good practice is encouraged and, as described above, is central to building on the good practice identified in the last HER (EC). Staff who met the review team were aware of key external reference points that underpin standards, quality and enhancement.

Background to the monitoring visit

15 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.

16 The monitoring visit was carried out by Cameron Waitt, QAA Officer, and Dr Carol Vielba, QAA Reviewer, on 23 January 2019.

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