



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

ONCAMPUS UK North

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

Changes since the last QAA review

2 The total number of students at ONCAMPUS UK North remains stable. The vast majority of students are on the Undergraduate Foundation Programme (UFP). Numbers on the UFP medical pathway constitute half of the main September UFP intake. Numbers on the Master's Foundation Programme (MFP) remain at a low level.

3 Since the 2018 Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) (HER (EC)), the Centre has moved to a new location that is located more centrally within the University. A new Centre Head has been appointed.

4 Over the past year, the Centre has adapted its mission and operational model from one that focuses on progression to the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) to a hub and spoke model which prepares students for progression to a range of universities located in the north and beyond. The reason for the change is the belief that the Centre would be unsustainable as a centre based solely on progression to UCLan. This model is intended to facilitate the continued growth of the Centre as a primary location, within the ONCAMPUS UK network, for life sciences and pre-medical studies. These changes are reflected in the renaming of the Centre as ONCAMPUS UK North; appointment of staff to support student progression activities including UCAS applications; and the pursuit of recognition arrangements with a range of universities attractive to its students.

Findings from the monitoring visit

5 The 2018 HER (EC) made no recommendations or affirmations. It identified three areas of good practice: one relating to the use of virtual interviews for borderline candidates; the second was the personalised approach to learning and teaching which supports student achievement; and third, the high levels of student engagement. Following the HER (EC), the Centre developed an action plan to build further on the areas of good practice that had been identified. The review team concluded that the Centre is making commendable progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its provision.

6 All actions identified in the action plan have addressed and completed and their effectiveness evaluated as far as possible. The Centre has built on the good practice of using virtual interviews by undertaking a comparative analysis of the achievement of borderline students, looking at whether they were interviewed by a subject tutor or not. Interview questions have been reviewed and amended, and the scheme rolled out to nursing for subject tutors to interview borderline candidates. Staff training for interviewing has been undertaken. In relation to the second feature of good practice, the college is exploring ways of providing students with a broader range of opportunities for progression through the development of the hub and spoke model. Other initiatives have been the introduction of streaming on the UFP medical pathway and a review of individual students who have changed classes. Student engagement remains high and regular student representative meetings have been supplemented by mid-term focus groups. Students who met with the review team confirmed that the student representative system worked effectively and training had been available. Views and opinions are also sought in other ways such as surveys, and the review team heard examples of changes that had been made to induction, the teaching environment and the timetable as a result of listening to student views.

7 During the past year, internal reviews have taken place of provision at the Centre. The CEG Central Quality Audit has given the Centre a green RAG (the red-amber-green traffic light system) rating. The report identified good practice in working with a nearby university specialising in education, as well as a number of actions taken and planned to enhance the student experience.

8 Annual monitoring reports (AMRs) analyse the operation of programmes over the previous year, evaluate actions taken with respect to previous reports and propose further enhancement activity. Peer review of AMRs within ONCAMPUS provides critical comment on the reviews and proposed actions. Commentary on the AMRs for 2017-18 at the Centre noted that reports were thorough and that action plans were clearly developed from detailed analysis of pathway performance.

9 The Centre Head, working with senior staff and pathway leaders, is responsible for coordinating the action plans derived from external and internal reviews. Staff who met the review team provided a number of examples of enhancements that have been implemented, in addition to those undertaken in response to formal reviews, including management and peer observation, increased links with the University, and initiatives on e-learning.

10 The Centre has an Enhancement Strategy which has recently been updated. The document summarises the Centre's four-year strategic plan and proposes key objectives for action during the current year. The strategy also reviews progress in delivering enhancement through teaching, learning and assessment; student engagement; student support and pastoral care; data analysis; and curriculum development. Student involvement is highlighted, being seen as instrumental in assisting with the improvement of programmes and enabling enhancement of both their own and future student academic experience. Students were well aware of the enhancement strategy.

11 The review team concluded that ONCAMPUS UK North 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, ONCAMPUS UK North is involved in admissions in various ways. Academic entrance requirements are agreed between ONCAMPUS UK North and the University and notified to central Admissions. These are published on the web and in centrally generated brochures.

Skype interviews with subject tutors are used during admission to determine the suitability of candidates. All students applying to the medical programme and on guaranteed pathways are interviewed, as well as applicants whose qualifications are marginal. As noted above, the Centre's use of virtual interviews was identified as good practice at the last review - action has been taken to evaluate and enhance the process as well as to extend its use.

12 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 ONCAMPUS UK North. Students who met the review team expressed satisfaction with the admission process, stating that it was smooth and effective, and that they had been well-informed throughout.

13 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. 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.

14 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 are submitted electronically using plagiarism-detection software. Staff training has taken place on various aspects of assessment. Assessment is discussed regularly 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.

15 Completion, pass and progression rates are very high, including for the UFP medical pathway which has a high threshold for securing an interview for the University's medical programme. Pass rates vary on the non-medical UFP and lag on engineering and life sciences. The college is addressing the language and study challenges faced by students from particular cultural and educational backgrounds on these programmes.

16 No external reviews of ONCAMPUS UK North provision have taken place since the last HER (EC).

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

17 Staff at the Centre demonstrate highly-effective engagement with relevant external reference points. The requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), *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 UK North. ONCAMPUS centrally appoints external examiners whose reports are shared with ONCAMPUS UK North staff, analysed in annual monitoring reports, and appropriate action taken.

18 Staff are made aware of expectations for quality and standards by subject leaders, through learning and teaching events, in staff meetings, during continuing professional development, and have access online to the Provider's Quality Manual. Centre staff also work closely with the University. Many of the programmes to which centre students are eligible to progress, are accredited by professional bodies. Sharing of good practice is encouraged. Staff who met the review team were aware of the Quality Code and other key external reference points that underpin standards, quality and enhancement.

Background to the monitoring visit

19 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 HER (EC). 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.

20 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Philip Markey, QAA Officer, and Dr Carol Vielba, QAA Reviewer, on 25 January 2019.

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