



Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) of ONCAMPUS Reading

March 2018

Contents

About this review	1
Key findings.....	2
Judgements	2
Good practice	2
Recommendations	2
Affirmations.....	2
Financial sustainability, management and governance	2
About the provider	3
Explanation of findings.....	4
1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered by the provider and/or on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations.....	4
2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities.....	14
3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities	26
4 Commentary on the enhancement of student learning opportunities	29
Glossary.....	30

About this review

This report should be read in conjunction with the Provider CEG UFP Ltd report.

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at ONCAMPUS Reading. The review took place from 7 to 8 March 2018 and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Sylvia Hargreaves
- Professor Alan Jago

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provision and to make judgements as to whether or not academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations are the statements in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code)¹ setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
 - the setting and maintenance of academic standards
 - the quality of student learning opportunities
 - the information provided about higher education provision
 - the enhancement of student learning opportunities
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

A check is also made on the provider's financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) with the aim of giving students reasonable confidence that they should not be at risk of being unable to complete their course as a result of financial failure.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#)² and explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Embedded Colleges\)](#).³ For an explanation of terms see the glossary at the end of this report.

¹ The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.

² QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk.

³ Higher Education Review (Embedded Colleges): www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education.

Key findings

Judgements

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision.

- The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered by itself and/or on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of student learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.
- The quality of the information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following feature of **good practice**.

- The highly personalised approach to learning and teaching that supports individual student needs and achievement (Expectation B3).

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendation**.

By September 2018:

- Work with the ONCAMPUS marketing team to ensure that centrally produced published information is accurately customised so that it is fully applicable to ONCAMPUS Reading (Expectation C).

Affirmations

The QAA review team did not identify any affirmations.

Financial sustainability, management and governance

The financial sustainability, management and governance check has been satisfactorily completed.

About the provider

ONCAMPUS Reading (the Centre) opened for its first cohort of students in September 2017 and is located in the London Road part of the Reading University campus. It currently runs an Undergraduate Foundation Programme with approximately 25 students.

The centre is staffed following the standard ONCAMPUS (the Provider) model, and is led by a Centre Head supported by a Student Support Assistant. The Centre hires entirely sessional teachers, according to standard ONCAMPUS operating procedures for a centre of this size.

As a new centre, this is the first review undertaken by QAA.

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

1 Judgement: The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered by the provider and/or on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations

Expectation (A1): In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies:

a) ensure that the requirements of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ)* are met by:

- positioning their qualifications at the appropriate level of the relevant framework for higher education qualifications
- ensuring that programme learning outcomes align with the relevant qualification descriptor in the relevant framework for higher education qualifications
- naming qualifications in accordance with the titling conventions specified in the frameworks for higher education qualifications
- awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of positively defined programme learning outcomes

b) consider and take account of QAA's guidance on qualification characteristics

c) where they award UK credit, assign credit values and design programmes that align with the specifications of the relevant national credit framework

d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.

Quality Code, Chapter A1: UK and European Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.1 ONCAMPUS Reading, embedded in Reading University, is not a degree awarding body.

1.2 ONCAMPUS Reading offers one ONCAMPUS programme, the standard Undergraduate Foundation Programme. The Centre opened for its first cohort of students in September 2017

1.3 ONCAMPUS has an agreement in place that Reading University will offer successful students progression to a relevant degree programme at the University. Thus quality assurance of programmes is managed entirely by ONCAMPUS.

1.4 There are programme specifications for the programme offered. It states that external reference points used in drawing up the programme specification were the UK Quality Code, QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and NICATS level descriptors.

1.5 The process would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.6 The review team examined the effectiveness of the practices and procedures by reviewing contractual and approval documentation, including programme and module specifications, and external examiner reports. The review team also held meetings with students, teaching and administrative staff, and senior staff.

1.7 The documentation that the review team examined demonstrated that the Centre adheres to the ONCAMPUS approval, monitoring and review procedures, which safeguard academic standards.

1.8 Programme specifications provide learning outcomes phased to reflect the level of the programmes and a mapping between learning outcomes and modules.

1.9 The evidence made available satisfied the review team the Expectation is met with a low level of risk

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.1): In order to secure their academic standards, degree-awarding bodies establish transparent and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations to govern how they award academic credit and qualifications.

Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.10 The ONCAMPUS Academic Board has ultimate responsibility for academic standards and quality. Five sub-committees, the Learning and Teaching Committee (with responsibility for the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy), the recently established Quality Committee (with operational oversight of annual monitoring and key quality policies) and three Programme Committees (with responsibility for the MFP, UFP and IY1 respectively) report directly to Academic Board. Subject Groups, responsible for the operation and delivery of the curriculum at subject level for all relevant programmes, report, respectively, to the MFP, UFP and IY1 Programme Committees.

1.11 Executive responsibility for ONCAMPUS academic standards and quality rests with the Chief and Deputy Academic Officers. Centre Heads, who have operational responsibility for provision at Centres, exercise ONCAMPUS academic governance functions as members of Academic Board. Deputy Centre Heads, subject leaders and tutors have specific responsibilities for quality, including participating in network-wide quality committees.

1.12 The ONCAMPUS assessment regulations apply to the ONCAMPUS Reading programme.

1.13 The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.14 The review team examined the effectiveness of academic governance by reviewing the ONCAMPUS Quality Assurance Manual and an extensive range of ONCAMPUS committee minutes and recent ONCAMPUS Reading staff meeting minutes. The team also held meetings with the Head of Centre, teaching and support staff, a University representative and students.

1.15 ONCAMPUS Reading, which admitted its first cohort of students in September 2017, is staffed by a small team comprising the Centre Head, a part-time student support assistant and three sessional tutors. The Centre is represented within ONCAMPUS by the Centre Head, who attends the full range of ONCAMPUS and network-wide meetings, including Academic Board, Quality Committee, Learning and Teaching Committee and the UFP Programme Committee. Tutors attend Subject Group meetings.

1.16 While, as the Head of Centre acknowledged, the time commitment required of him with respect to committee attendance presents a challenge, it was clear that communication channels between ONCAMPUS and the Centre work effectively, via formal staff meetings, the virtual learning environment (VLE) and the regular, informal discussions within the staff team.

1.17 Apart from staff-student consultative committees (SSCCs), which are required by ONCAMPUS and operate at the Centre, no particular centre-level quality committee framework is prescribed by ONCAMPUS. ONCAMPUS Reading has established termly, minuted, staff meetings which provide for formal communication of matters arising at ONCAMPUS and network level, as well as a forum for discussion of Centre-level quality matters.

1.18 ONCAMPUS Reading has in place and operates transparent and effective arrangements for academic governance and management. The Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A2.2): Degree-awarding bodies maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve (and of subsequent changes to it) which constitutes the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, its monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni.

Quality Code, Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards

Findings

1.19 ONCAMPUS is responsible for programme approval, modification and revalidation. The programme currently offered at ONCAMPUS Reading, the UFP Art and Design, was also developed and designed by ONCAMPUS. The programme specification, which is completed in the ONCAMPUS template, comprises the definitive record of the programme. Setting out programme learning outcomes and organisation, learning, teaching and assessment strategies, arrangements to support student learning, and quality assurance processes, the programme specification provides the reference point for programme delivery and assessment, monitoring and review.

1.20 The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.21 In testing this Expectation the review team viewed the VLE and examined the programme specification and annual programme monitoring documentation. The team also held meetings with the Head of Centre, teaching and support staff, a University representative and students.

1.22 Staff whom the review team met articulated an understanding of the programme specification, which is readily accessible to staff and students on the ONCAMPUS intranet, as the definitive reference point for delivery and assessment. Tutors for the academic subjects, who were appointed in readiness for the launch of the Centre this academic year, received information and guidance on teaching, learning and assessment during a training day provided for them at Reading by the Art and Design subject leader. The English tutor already had relevant experience, as she teaches at other ONCAMPUS Centres. Tutors have access to advice and guidance from the pathway leader, and teaching observations provide the principal mechanism for ensuring that teaching delivery aligns with the specification. At the date of the visit, no summative assessments had been completed.

1.23 Staff said that teaching and/or content may be adapted to the local context, but this occurs only within the scope of the existing module and programme specifications. Any changes to specifications require formal approval by Academic Board.

1.24 The ONCAMPUS annual programme monitoring template requires commentary and analysis of core programme elements including content, delivery and assessment, student support, and student feedback. At the date of the review, the first annual cycle at ONCAMPUS Reading was not yet completed, and consequently, no reports were available.

1.25 The programme specification is used effectively as the reference point for programme delivery. ONCAMPUS processes should allow the programme specification to be used appropriately as a reference point for assessment and annual programme monitoring by ONCAMPUS Reading. Accordingly, at the date of the review, the Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.1): Degree-awarding bodies establish and consistently implement processes for the approval of taught programmes and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at a level which meets the UK threshold standard for the qualification and are in accordance with their own academic frameworks and regulations.

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.26 The ONCAMPUS Academic Quality Assurance Manual details the procedures for initial programme approval. ONCAMPUS Reading follows the processes for the design and approval of modules, programmes and new pathways.

1.27 The procedures for programme approval provide a framework that allows the Expectation to be met.

1.28 The review team considered a range of documentation relating to programme approval and review, including relevant quality assurance processes, programme and module specifications, and committee minutes. The team also met staff responsible for the oversight and operation of the processes within the Centre.

1.29 In following the requirements of the ONCAMPUS Quality Assurance Manual, including the Qualifications Framework, ONCAMPUS centres make rigorous and systematic use of external benchmarks and the FHEQ in the design and approval of new programmes.

1.30 There are effective processes in place for the approval and re-approval of taught programmes that enable the Centre to ensure academic standards are set at a level that meets the UK standard for the qualification, and are in accordance with ONCAMPUS's academic frameworks and regulations. The review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.2): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that credit and qualifications are awarded only where:

- **the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (module learning outcomes in the case of credit and programme outcomes in the case of qualifications) has been demonstrated through assessment**
- **both UK threshold standards and their own academic standards have been satisfied.**

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.31 The programme specification for the UFP Art and Design at ONCAMPUS Reading is completed in the ONCAMPUS template. It sets out the intended learning outcomes of the programme, providing opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in intellectual, subject-specific and transferable skills. The specification also sets out assessment methods and describes how these relate to testing the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Module assessments are designed to combine to assess students on the overall programme outcomes, as represented in the mapping tables contained in the programme specification.

1.32 The processes and documentation in place allow the Expectation to be met.

1.33 The review team examined the effectiveness of the practices and procedures by reviewing the programme specification (including mapping tables), sample assignment briefs and external examiner reports. The team also held meetings with the Head of Centre, teaching and support staff, a University representative and students.

1.34 Assignment briefs identify the specific learning outcomes being tested. Clear assessment criteria are provided to staff and students with the assignment briefs.

1.35 Although, at the at the date of the visit, no summative assessments had been completed, students met by the review team confirmed that they had undertaken formative assessments and that they have access to clear grade and marking criteria. While initially they had found it difficult to understand what was required to achieve good marks in the academic assessments, students said that feedback from formative assessments, over time, had helped them to a better understanding, and to improve their work.

1.36 External examiners confirm, across the suite of ONCAMPUS programmes including the UFP, that assessment processes are well aligned with the learning outcomes and so effectively test achievement of the learning outcomes.

1.37 The arrangements in place, though still to be implemented in full at ONCAMPUS Reading as the first delivery cycle is completed, ensure that the achievement of the relevant learning outcomes has been demonstrated through assessment. Accordingly, the Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.3): Degree-awarding bodies ensure that processes for the monitoring and review of programmes are implemented which explicitly address whether the UK threshold academic standards are achieved and whether the academic standards required by the individual degree-awarding body are being maintained.

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.38 Programmes are subject to periodic review every five years. The procedure for conducting periodic review is set out in the Quality Manual.

1.39 Procedures for annual monitoring are also set out in the Quality Manual. This involves the completion of a standard form for each programme with a Centre based commentary. This process has not yet been implemented at ONCAMPUS Reading, since the course only began in September 2017.

1.40 The procedures for both periodic review and annual monitoring are clearly articulated and allow the Expectation to be met.

1.41 The review team could not test this Expectation at ONCAMPUS Reading since the Centre had only opened in September 2017. The review team heard from staff at the Centre that they would be following the ONCAMPUS processes and procedures at the appropriate time.

1.42 The Expectation is met with a low level of associated risk

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

Expectation (A3.4): In order to be transparent and publicly accountable, degree-awarding bodies use external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintaining academic standards to advise on whether:

- **UK threshold academic standards are set, delivered and achieved**
- **the academic standards of the degree-awarding body are appropriately set and maintained.**

Quality Code, Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards

Findings

1.43 ONCAMPUS, which holds ultimate responsibility for academic standards, uses external expertise in its programme design, approval and periodic review processes, and appoints external examiners to its ONCAMPUS programmes, to advise on whether academic standards are appropriately set and maintained. Where programmes are developed in conjunction with university partners, university staff members act as the external body for approval purposes. With regard to the design, approval and review of programmes developed by ONCAMPUS, the processes require consultation with independent external subject specialists. At Centre level, the external examiner system provides for ongoing engagement with external expertise, as does continuing liaison with colleagues at the respective partner universities.

1.44 The processes in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

1.45 The review team examined the effectiveness of the arrangements by reviewing process and procedural documentation and internal meeting minutes. The team also held meetings with the Head of Centre, teaching and support staff, a University representative and students.

1.46 The Head of Centre has established links with the University at institutional and faculty level. These are providing a useful mechanism for taking forward discussions about the extension of the Centre's portfolio to include pre-Master's programmes in Art and Design and Economics and Social Sciences. University tutors share subject expertise through workshops attended by Centre staff and students, and one of the Centre's sessional tutors also teaches at the University.

1.47 At the date of the visit, no summative assessment had been completed. Consequently, existing external examiner feedback was not directly relevant to ONCAMPUS Reading. The most recent report was available to staff on the VLE and the review team heard from staff that staff meetings would be used to discuss and address external examiner feedback.

1.48 Arrangements for the effective use of independent expertise for the ongoing development and review of the Centre's programme offering are being consolidated. Accordingly the Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered by the provider and/or on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations: Summary of findings

1.49 In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

1.50 All of the seven of the Expectations in this area are met with low risk. There are no recommendations, affirmations or areas of good practice recorded for this section of the report.

1.51 The review team concludes that the maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered by the provider and/or on behalf of degree-awarding bodies and/or other awarding organisations **meets** UK expectations.

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Expectation (B1): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective processes for the design, development and approval of programmes.

Quality Code, Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval

Findings

2.1 The arrangements for design, development and approval of programmes are detailed in the Quality Manual. This process applied to the UFP at ONCAMPUS Reading.

2.2 The procedures for programme approval laid down in the ONCAMPUS Academic Quality Assurance Manual provide a framework which in principle allows the Expectation to be met.

2.3 The review team examined documentation related to approval of the Centre's programme and asked staff about the process, and thus were able to test whether the Expectations is met in practice.

2.4 The evidence made available to the review team satisfied it that this Expectation is met with a low level of associated risk.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B2): Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Quality Code, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education

Findings

2.5 ONCAMPUS uses a world-wide network of student recruitment agents, which operates within a detailed, documented compliance and monitoring framework. Students are invited to provide feedback on the quality of agents' services via the ONCAMPUS induction questionnaire. Admissions are handled by the ONCAMPUS central admissions team. Entry requirements are determined by the Head of Admissions, in consultation with partner universities, on the basis of a range of criteria, including degree progression requirements and sector benchmarking. Prospective students apply for a particular degree programme when they apply for admission to an ONCAMPUS programme. Applicants are asked to report any disabilities or special needs, so that appropriate support can be provided. Heads of Centre have a formal role in admissions, making final decisions on borderline applications passed to them by the ONCAMPUS admissions team.

2.6 Admissions processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.7 The review team considered the effectiveness of the practices and procedures by viewing the ONCAMPUS website and examining procedural and compliance documents and other documentation including sample offer packs. The team also held meetings with the Head of Centre, teaching and support staff, a University representative and students.

2.8 Information about ONCAMPUS Reading, the programmes, the entry requirements and the application process is accessible on the website. The ONCAMPUS Reading brochure, which is available online, details the grade requirements for onward progression to each specific Reading University programme. While, overall, the information is clear and helpful, the review team found omissions and inaccuracies of detail in the brochure, and made a recommendation to the Centre concerning the customisation of centrally produced published information (see paragraph 3.6). The helpful standard offer pack, sent out by the ONCAMPUS admissions team, sets out offer conditions and course and fee information, and confirms eligibility for a specified degree course, subject to University entry criteria. Applicants are referred to the University website for further relevant information.

2.9 The Head of Centre makes admissions decisions on borderline applications passed to him by ONCAMPUS central admissions. Decisions are informed by academic and English grades, and additional information in personal statements is used to assess English fluency and an applicant's passion for Art. The evidence is viewed against the demands of the programme and the relevant progression degrees. Three borderline students were admitted this year, the first year of delivery of the programme. One of these has been identified as struggling and has been given extra support. It was clear that the progress of borderline students (as well as non-borderlines) is being carefully monitored.

2.10 Overall, students whom the review team met were satisfied with the information that was available pre-entry, the services of agents and the application process, though some students commented that programme focus and content did not entirely match their expectations.

2.11 Overall, recruitment, selection and admission procedures are transparent and inclusive and operate fairly with respect to the ONCAMPUS Reading programmes. The Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B3): Higher education providers, working with their staff, students and other stakeholders, articulate and systematically review and enhance the provision of learning opportunities and teaching practices, so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Quality Code, *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*

Findings

2.12 ONCAMPUS has a Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2016-20 which is owned and managed by the central learning and Teaching Committee. The focus of the strategy is on students as independent learners and the provision of a high quality learning environment. Responsibility for the Strategy rests with the Academic Office and the Heads of Centre. External Examiners commented positively about how well students are prepared for progression to their university partners.

2.13 The policies and practices of the provider allow the Expectation to be met.

2.14 The review team tested the Expectation by reviewing documentation including curriculum documents and external examiner reports, and by meeting teaching and support staff, and students.

2.15 Currently there are three teaching staff at ONCAMPUS Reading, one with experience in another ONCAMPUS Centre. Their teaching practice is supported in a number of ways, including on-line materials through the VLE, specific training to Centre staff by the central Academic Office, the biennial Learning and Teaching Conference, regular in-session training days and a continuing professional development (CPD) fund. Staff at ONCAMPUS Reading do not have access to staff development opportunities in their university partner currently. All staff receive an induction programme. Teaching staff have regular management teaching observations as part of the appraisal process.

2.16 Students are given a comprehensive induction programme where they are introduced to their programme as well as their university partner. The students have access to the ONCAMPUS VLE which is used extensively by students and staff to support learning. Students are well supported in their development as independent learners which aims to give them a smooth transition to their degree studies. The highly personalised approach to learning and teaching that supports individual student needs and achievements is **good practice**. Students at ONCAMPUS Reading have limited access to university facilities, although this is made clear to students.

2.17 ONCAMPUS monitors and reviews the effectiveness of learning opportunities by end of programme surveys and by feedback through the committee structure. In addition the ONCAMPUS Centre Academic Oversight Process contributes to the review and enhancement of learning opportunities and teaching practices, although this has not yet operated at ONCAMPUS Reading.

2.18 Learning resources and student support are in place to support student learning and achievement and prepare students for university study. There are systematic and effective assurance and review processes are in place to ensure the quality of provision is enhanced. The Expectation is met and the associated level of risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement

Findings

2.19 ONCAMPUS has a clear policy to support students in their development. They provide a process for monitoring and preparing for student development, enabling students to reflect and lead their own development through the IT portal, with the provision of in-depth feedback from staff.

2.20 The review team found that ONCAMPUS Reading has appropriate policies and processes in place to monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources that enable students to develop their potential. This enables the Expectation to be met.

2.21 In order to test the effectiveness of the provider's processes, the review team looked at policies and procedures, handbooks and supporting documentation. The review team discussed the availability of support services and the development of skills for higher education in its meetings with both staff and students.

2.22 The review team concluded that ONCAMPUS Reading provides a range of activities and support services which enable students to develop their academic and personal potential. It was noted that ONCAMPUS Reading students have limited access to university resources and facilities. In addition they incur additional costs for materials which they are only made aware of on arrival. Meeting with students, and Head of Centre Programmes are structured to provide an intensive and supportive study environment, with teaching in small groups and high levels of contact. By using both regular personal tutorials and regular subject based tutorials staff facilitate individual learning and achievement. New staff are prepared for supporting students by their induction and management support.

2.23 All students receive a thorough induction programme where students are introduced to the practicalities of studying in the UK, and the expectations arising from this. Each student has a personal tutor. In its first year of operation this is the Head of Centre. The ONCAMPUS tutorial policy is that all students have personal contact with their students at least weekly. The Centre monitors attendance and student achievement closely. Students at risk are noted and appropriate follow up action taken. Students who met the review team spoke positively about the ways in which the Centre's staff enabled them to develop and achieve. Information about the services available to them are provided in the student handbooks and is available on the VLE

2.24 The adequacy and efficiency of services that enable student development and achievement is monitored through Centre Audit, annual monitoring and periodic review, and discussed both at SSCCs, although these processes have not yet been fully implemented at ONCAMPUS Reading.

2.25 The review team concluded that ONCAMPUS Reading operates effectively to enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential. The Expectation is met with low risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement

Findings

2.26 The ONCAMPUS Academic Quality Assurance Manual lists a number of ways in which students are engaged with quality assurance and enhancement, including surveys and student representation on both central programme committees and Centre SSCCs. Prompt questions at SSCCs have replaced end of module surveys. Minutes from SSCCs are made available to the Learning and Teaching Committee, Programme Committees and to programme/pathway leaders. Questionnaires are continuing in relation to student views about induction and the end of programme. The framework that ONCAMPUS has set to secure student engagement with quality assurance of their educational experience should ensure that student views are articulated both on a group and on an individual basis and would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.27 In order to ascertain whether this operates in practice, the review team examined documentation including the Quality Manual, the minutes of relevant committees and met with both staff and students.

2.28 Staff and students that the review team met in the Centre confirmed that the arrangements described in the Quality Manual were operational. Meetings with staff and students. There was a system of student representation. Students received training to exercise their role. Students confirmed that they were able to identify issues which they had raised and to which the Centre had responded positively. They also understood that it was not always possible for the Centre to make any changes that students had requested. SSCCs meet termly and minutes of their meetings are made available to a students. Minutes of the Programme Committees show student representatives making a contribution, with a standing item in each meeting devoted to a student from each Centre reporting.

2.29 The review team was satisfied this Expectation was met with a low level of risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognition of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Quality Code, *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning*

Findings

2.30 In accordance with ONCAMPUS strategy, programme specifications set out a range of assessment methodologies including project work, reports, essays, presentations, and examinations. The strategic approach highlights the value of formative assessment.

2.31 Assessment processes for all ONCAMPUS programmes operate within a network-wide system. Subject groups are responsible for producing assessments. External examiners must be consulted on draft examination papers and marking schemes. Student requests for 'reasonable adjustments' are considered by the ONCAMPUS Chief Academic Officer and the range of available adjustments is formally documented. Marking and moderation is completed by tutors at Centres, using authorised mark schemes. Subject groups must undertake pre-assessment standardisation involving all relevant tutors. External examiners scrutinise sample marked assessed work. Plagiarism-detection software is used to support students' understanding of plagiarism and as a tool to deal with academic offences. Responsibility for providing feedback to students rests with tutors. Examination boards are administered by ONCAMPUS. Extenuating circumstances are considered at pre-examination boards.

2.32 Assessment processes would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.33 ONCAMPUS Reading admitted the first cohort of students this year, and at the date of the review visit, no summative assessments had been completed. In meetings with the Head of Centre, teaching and support staff and students the review team tested staff understanding of ONCAMPUS assessment processes, the extent to which they had been prepared to undertake student assessment, and the effectiveness of feedback to students on formative assessments.

2.34 Tutors understood, and had been effectively prepared for, their role in the assessment. Following their appointment, academic tutors received information and guidance on assessment processes (as well as on teaching) during a training day provided for them at Reading by the Art and Design subject leader. The English tutor already had experience of ONCAMPUS assessment processes, as she teaches at other ONCAMPUS centres. Staff referred to imminent standardisation meetings, which they were due to attend, and described the arrangements to be put in place by the Art and Design pathway leader to ensure effective internal moderation in support of the new ONCAMPUS Reading teaching team.

2.35 Staff said that feedback to students may be written or oral. The Head of Centre indicated that plans for enhancement of the student experience include improvements to the quality of feedback to students. There is a Centre expectation that marked work be returned to students within two weeks, and the ONCAMPUS annual calendar sets completion deadlines for the marking and moderation of summative assessments.

2.36 Students confirmed that they have access to assessment criteria. While initially they had found it difficult to understand what was required to achieve good marks in the

academic assessments, students said that feedback from formative assessments, over time, had helped them to a better understanding, and to improve their work. Students also confirmed that they had access to the assessment regulations on the VLE and had received guidance on how to avoid plagiarism.

2.37 Formative assessment processes operate effectively. While it was too early to test the effectiveness of summative assessment processes, the steps taken to prepare tutors for their role in assessing students should ensure that ONCAMPUS requirements are satisfied. Accordingly the Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, *Chapter B7: External Examining*

Findings

2.38 External examiners are appointed by ONCAMPUS. They are inducted to their role and guided by the external examiner handbook. External examiners must be consulted on draft examination papers and related marking schemes. The ONCAMPUS report template asks external examiners to comment on the academic standards of the awards, student achievement, assessment processes, and curriculum design and delivery. The processes also require formal responses to be made by ONCAMPUS directly to external examiners, following consideration of their reports. External examiners are encouraged to visit one of the Centres in each year of their appointment.

2.39 The external examiner arrangements in place allow the Expectation to be met.

2.40 ONCAMPUS Reading admitted the first cohort of students this year, and at the date of the review visit, no summative assessments had been completed. In meetings with the Head of Centre and teaching and support staff, the review team tested staff understanding of ONCAMPUS assessment processes, including the role of external examiners. The team also held a meeting with students.

2.41 Once appointed, academic tutors received information and guidance on assessment processes (as well as on teaching) during a training day provided for them at Reading by the Art and Design subject leader. Staff confirmed that they, and students, have access to external examiner reports on the VLE. Staff showed an understanding of internal marking and moderation processes, and, in general terms, the role of the external examiner. Similarly, the role of the English external examiner, (who has just been appointed following the introduction of internal English assessments) was understood.

2.42 While it was not possible to assess the effectiveness of the operation of ONCAMPUS external examiner processes at the Centre, as no summative assessment had yet taken place, the steps taken to prepare tutors for assessing students should ensure that ONCAMPUS requirements are satisfied. Accordingly, at the date of the review, the Expectation is met. In the light of recommendations to ONCAMPUS in this area concerning the formal documentation of the external examiner appointment system, the timeliness of external examiner appointments and full adherence to procedures for responding to external examiner reports, the level of associated risk is moderate. Further details can be found in the Provider (CEG UFP Ltd) report.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Moderate

Expectation (B8): Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Quality Code, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review

Findings

2.43 The processes for annual monitoring and for periodic review are clearly articulated in the Academic Quality Assurance Manual. These processes are outlined in paragraph A3.3 above.

2.44 In principle, the approach which ONCAMPUS has adopted should ensure it is able to operate effective, regular and systematic processes for the monitoring and for the review of programmes, allowing the Expectation to be met.

2.45 The review team was able to test this in practice, by examining a range of documentation relating to the periodic review of the MFP and IY1, the annual monitoring of 2016-17 and through meetings with staff during the review visit.

2.46 It was clear to the review team that the processes for annual monitoring and periodic review of programmes were effective, although they had not yet been fully implemented in the Centre.

2.47 The review team concludes that ONCAMPUS Reading will operate the ONCAMPUS procedures for both periodic programme review and annual programme monitoring which ensure that the Expectation is met with a low level of risk.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B9): Higher education providers have procedures for handling academic appeals and student complaints about the quality of learning opportunities; these procedures are fair, accessible and timely, and enable enhancement.

Quality Code, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints

Findings

2.48 The ONCAMPUS appeals and complaints policies and processes, which apply across the ONCAMPUS network, are set out in the Academic Quality Assurance Manual.

2.49 The appeals procedure, which is facilitated by the ONCAMPUS Chief Academic Officer (CAO), defines the grounds for appeal and sets out deadlines. Following initial assessment by the CAO, and if not upheld or rejected at this stage, an appeal moves to the Academic Appeals Committee, which acts under the full delegated authority of Academic Board. The outcomes of the committee hearing are conveyed to the appellant and to the relevant Centre Head (for action where required) and formally reported to Academic Board.

2.50 The complaints process begins locally with the staff member concerned or another member of staff and, if unresolved, moves to the Centre Head (or, for a complaint against them, to another Centre Head) for formal review and thence, if still unresolved, to final review by the Reviewing Officer (Chief Operating Officer, Chief Academic Officer and/or Managing Director). Deadlines for each stage are set out clearly, and the process is formally completed with a written response to the complainant, together with a 'Completion of Procedures' letter if the complaint is not upheld.

2.51 Policies and procedures for student complaints and appeals would allow the Expectation to be met.

2.52 In order to test this Expectation the review team viewed the VLE and examined policy and procedural documents and other documentation including the student handbook, the ONCAMPUS complaints log and meeting minutes, with associated documentation. The team also held meetings with the Head of Centre, teaching and support staff, a University representative and students.

2.53 The complaints policy and procedure, together with the relevant forms for the formal stages of the process, are accessible to students on the VLE. The appeals policy and procedure are set out in full in the ONCAMPUS student handbook.

2.54 Personal tutorial sessions, together with accessibility to staff generally, provide students with the means to raise any informal complaints, which are recorded and monitored via student files. There have been no formal complaints or appeals from ONCAMPUS Reading students.

2.55 Students whom the review team met confirmed that they have access to information about formal appeals and complaints processes.

2.56 ONCAMPUS Reading students have appropriate opportunities to raise complaints informally and have access to processes and information about appeals and formal complaints. The Expectation is met and the level of associated risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.57 In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.58 All nine Expectations in this area are met with low risk, except for Expectation B7 which is met but with a moderate associated risk. There are no recommendations in this section, but a cross reference to a recommendation for the Provider has led to the higher level of risk associated to B7. There is one good practice in Expectation B3, which recognises a theme across all of the ONCAMPUS network and no affirmations.

2.59 The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at the centre **meets** UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The ONCAMPUS central marketing department is responsible for issuing public information, and for maintaining the accuracy of the website. The central marketing team is represented on Academic Board, to facilitate the oversight of processes designed to ensure the accuracy of externally published information. Information is available to prospective students via printed literature and the ONCAMPUS website, and information is also available from ONCAMPUS overseas agents. Additional documentation, such as programme handbooks, are maintained by the Academic Office and held on the ONCAMPUS VLE. The information they contain is checked and overseen by the Chief and Deputy Chief Academic Officers. Responsibility for centre-level sign-off of all ONCAMPUS Reading specific published information rests with the Head of Centre, following checking and approval by the University.

3.2 ONCAMPUS senior staff described the relevant processes for ensuring that published information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy: design and review of information centrally, sign-off by the Centre Head, and senior staff and University approval.

3.3 The arrangements in place would allow the Expectation to be met.

3.4 In considering the effectiveness of the processes the review team viewed the ONCAMPUS Reading website and examined the brochure, student handbooks and other published information. The team also held meetings with the Head of Centre, teaching and support staff, a University representative and students.

3.5 Information about ONCAMPUS Reading, the programmes, the entry requirements and the application process is accessible on the website. The ONCAMPUS Reading brochure, which is available online, details the grade requirements for onward progression to each specific Reading University programme. While, overall, the information was clear and helpful, the review team found inaccuracies of detail in, and an omission from, the brochure. The QAA logo, accompanied by wording which was arguably capable of suggesting (wrongly) that the Centre had already been reviewed by the QAA, appeared in the Centre brochure; the brochure stated that ONCAMPUS Reading students can access all the University's facilities, a statement that was acknowledged by Centre senior staff to be inaccurate; and the omission of details about additional costs for students for the purchase of materials in term 3.

3.6 ONCAMPUS senior staff, acknowledging that mistakes had been made, stated that the QAA logo and accompanying wording had now been removed from the website (the team was able to verify this, though at the completion of the visit, the online brochure remained unamended with respect to the other matters) and that the paper brochure had been withdrawn. The review team recommends that the Centre work with the ONCAMPUS marketing team to ensure that centrally produced published information is accurately customised so that it is fully applicable to ONCAMPUS Reading.

3.7 The helpful standard offer pack, sent out by the ONCAMPUS admissions team, sets out offer conditions and course and fee information, and confirms eligibility for a specified degree course, subject to University entry criteria. Applicants are referred to the University website for further relevant information. The pre-arrival handbook, also providing useful information, covers visa requirements, what to expect on arrival, travel to Reading, accommodation, finance, and a sample timetable. Students met by the review team were satisfied with VLE and handbook information.

3.8 Overall, Centre-specific published information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy and therefore the Expectation is met. However, the review team found inaccuracies of detail in, and an omission from, the brochure and made a recommendation in this respect. In the light of the recommendations to the Centre and to ONCAMPUS respectively concerning the accurate customisation of Centre-specific published information, the level of associated risk is moderate. Further details can be found in the Provider (CEG UFP Ltd) report.

Expectation: Met

Level of risk: Moderate

The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.9 In reaching its judgement, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

3.10 The Expectation in this area is met with moderate risk. There are no areas of good practice or affirmations for the Centre in this section. There is one recommendation and a cross reference to a recommendation made at Provider level, which have resulted in a moderate risk level being assigned.

3.11 The review team concludes that the quality of the information produced by the centre about its provision meets UK expectations

4 Commentary on the enhancement of student learning opportunities

Expectation (Enhancement): Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1 ONCAMPUS has a newly instigated Enhancement Strategy, which is supported by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. Centres are expected to produce a Centre specific enhancement strategy that they wish to undertake for their students.

4.2 The review team examined relevant documentation and discussed the Centre enhancement activity with staff and students.

4.3 ONCAMPUS Reading has as its main priorities for enhancement, enhancing course level relationships with the university, and the introduction of a mentoring scheme.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Definitions of key operational terms are also given on pages 24-27 of the [Higher Education Review \(Embedded Colleges\) handbook](#).

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality: www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality.

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer Glossary on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/Pages/GlossaryEN.aspx.

Academic standards

The standards set by **degree-awarding bodies** for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Award

A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended **learning outcomes** and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a **programme** or unit of study.

Awarding organisation

An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

Blended learning

Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see **technology enhanced or enabled learning**).

Credit(s)

A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education **programmes of study**, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level.

Degree-awarding body

A UK higher education provider (typically a university) with the power to award degrees, conferred by Royal Charter, or under Section 76 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, or under Section 48 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992, or by Papal Bull, or, since 1999, granted by the Privy Council on advice from QAA (in response to applications for taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers or university title).

Distance learning

A course of study that does not involve face-to-face contact between students and tutors but instead uses technology such as the internet, intranets, broadcast media, CD-ROM and video, or traditional methods of correspondence - learning 'at a distance'. See also **blended learning**.

Dual award or double award

The granting of separate awards (and certificates) for the same **programme** by two **degree-awarding bodies** who have jointly delivered the programme of study leading to them. See also **multiple award**.

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Enhancement

The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in our review processes.

Expectations

Statements in the **Quality Code** that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations. See also **distance learning**.

Framework

A published formal structure. See also **framework for higher education qualifications**.

Framework for higher education qualifications

A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FQHEIS).

Good practice

A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

Learning opportunities

The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcomes

What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

Multiple awards

An arrangement where three or more **degree-awarding bodies** together provide a single jointly delivered **programme** (or programmes) leading to a separate **award** (and separate certification) of each awarding body. The arrangement is the same as for **dual/double awards**, but with three or more awarding bodies being involved.

Operational definition

A formal definition of a term, establishing exactly what QAA means when using it in reviews and reports.

Programme (of study)

An approved course of study that provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Programme specifications

Published statements about the intended **learning outcomes** of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

Quality Code

Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of **reference points** for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the **Expectations** that all providers are required to meet.

Reference points

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Self-evaluation document

A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

Subject Benchmark Statement

A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard

The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic **award**. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national **frameworks** and **Subject Benchmark Statements**.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to **learning opportunities** electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

Widening participation

Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

QAA2141d - R9893 - June 18

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2018
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557050
Website: www.qaa.ac.uk