



Roehampton Pathway Campus

Educational Oversight - Exceptional Arrangements

November 2017

About this report

This is a report of a review under the Educational Oversight - Exceptional Arrangements method conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Roehampton Pathway Campus. The review took place on 16 November 2017 and was conducted by a review team, as follows:

- Brenda Eade (Reviewer)
- Catherine Fairhurst (Reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to:

- make judgements about the provider's management of its responsibilities for academic standards, as set out in its contractual arrangements with its academic partner
- make judgements on the provider's management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities
- make judgements about the reliability of the information that the provider produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers
- report on any features of good practice
- make recommendations for action.

A summary of the [key findings](#) can be found in the section starting on page 2. The [context](#) in which these findings should be interpreted is explained on page 3. [Explanations](#) of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 6.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.¹ More information about this the review method can be found in the Handbook for providers.

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us

Key findings

The QAA panel considered evidence relating to the educational provision at Roehampton Pathway Campus, both information supplied in advance and evidence gathered during the review visit. The review has resulted in the key findings stated in this section.

Judgements

The QAA panel formed the following judgement Roehampton Pathway Campus.

- **Confidence** can be placed in Roehampton Pathway Campus's management of its responsibilities for academic standards, as set out in its contractual arrangements with its academic partner
- **Confidence** can be placed in Roehampton Pathway Campus's management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities.
- **Reliance can** be placed on the information that Roehampton Pathway Campus produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

The QAA panel identified no features of good practice at Roehampton Pathway Campus.

Recommendations

The QAA panel makes no recommendations to Roehampton Pathway Campus.

About Roehampton Pathway Campus

Roehampton Pathway Campus (the provider) is a limited company (number 09612532), registered in England at Grove House, Roehampton Lane. It was established through a Joint Venture between the University of Roehampton (the University) and QA Higher Education (QAHE) which is part of the QA Group. The holding company is Ichnaea Jersey Holdings Limited. The QA Group has been offering higher education since 2011.

The Pathway Campus is an extension of an existing partnership between the University of Roehampton and QAHE, through which QAHE delivers three-year and four-year extended degrees to over 2,000 students at three locations and also runs degree apprenticeships. This area of provision is not included in the review report. The senior management team confirmed that there are no plans for the existing degree programmes to become part of the Pathway Campus.

The Joint Venture is in line with the University's Strategic Plan to build innovative partnerships in order to grow overseas recruitment. It also supports the strategic decision of the QA Group in 2011, to offer fully accredited higher education programmes in partnership with UK universities. Both the University and the QA Group are committed to widening access to higher education. The programmes offered through the Pathway Campus provide an opportunity for international students who do not have the qualifications for immediate enrolment onto degree programmes to develop their language, academic and study skills to enable them to progress on to an undergraduate programme of study.

The proposal to create the Roehampton Pathway Campus was approved by the University's Senate on 19 November 2014 and the Campus was established in September 2016 through the Joint Venture. The terms and full details of the Joint Venture arrangement are contained in three agreements:

- the Roehampton Agreement which sets out the services the University will provide to the Roehampton Pathway Campus
- the Shareholder Agreement which regulates the operation and management of the Company and the relationship between the Shareholders
- the QAHE Service Agreement which sets out the services QAHE will provide to the Pathway Campus.

These agreements were signed by the various parties on 1 June 2015 and relate to the following three programmes:

- International Foundation Programme (IFP)
- Graduate Certificate
- Graduate Diploma.

During the summer term, pre-sessional English courses are run through the Pathway Campus. These are of five, 10 or 15 weeks' duration and full details relating to their delivery are contained in the operations manual.

At the time of the review, the Pathway Campus had 19 students on the International Foundation Programme. A further 30 students were expected to join the programme in January. Twenty-nine students completed the programme in June 2017. There were no students on the pre-sessional English programme at the time of the review visit, as this course does not recruit until the summer term. The senior management team indicated that the Pathway Campus had not been able to recruit sufficient numbers of students to the Graduate Certificate and the Graduate Diploma programmes for a viable cohort. The current

student numbers are significantly lower than those set out in the initial proposal to Senate which projected 160 students in 2016-17 rising to 400 in 2017-18.

The Pathway Campus has two full-time members of staff - the Campus Manager and a recently appointed member of teaching staff. The Campus Manager is supported by a part-time administrator. Sessional staff are used for the majority of the teaching and the College can draw on 130-plus permanent and sessional staff employed by QAHE. In addition, suitably qualified agency staff are available to provide short-term emergency cover.

The three written agreements referred to in paragraph 4 provide details of the relationship between the provider QAHE and the awarding body, Roehampton University, and set out the expectations of each partner in terms of the service they will provide for the Pathway Campus. The senior management teams at QAHE and the University are responsible for ensuring that the Joint Venture operates within the terms of the agreements. The Pathway Campus Manager reports to the Executive Dean at QAHE.

Under the terms of the agreements, QAHE is responsible for programme development. Definitive programme information is produced by the Pathway Campus and approved by the University through its validations processes.

The University has ultimate responsibility for maintaining academic standards. The Pathway Campus is responsible for the teaching, learning and assessment, but the University moderates the outcomes of the assessment process to ensure that standards are met. Periodic Review and the handling of student complaints and appeals is the responsibility of the University.

Student recruitment and admission is the responsibility of QAHE. Staff are selected by the Pathway Campus but final approval of staff appointments rests with the University.

The Pathway Campus has adopted the University's regulations, which enables the University to confer awards. Standards and the quality of the learning experience are monitored through the governance structures of the University. External examiners provide an external reference point for monitoring quality and standards.

As part of the validation process by the University the relevant sections of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) were used as an external reference point for the IFP. *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) provides the external reference point for the Graduate Certificate and Diploma. These references are included in the programme documentation produced by QAHE.

There have been no previous EOEA reviews and only one cohort of students has completed the programme.

The Pathway Campus is accredited by the British Council, who visited the Campus to review the provision in March 2017 and confirmed that the organisation met the standards of the scheme and identified areas of strength in teaching and the premises provided.

Detailed findings about Roehampton Pathway Campus

1 Academic standards

How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1 The Pathway Campus has effective processes for maintaining academic standards which are overseen by both QAHE and the University. The University has ultimate responsibility for assuring the quality and academic standards of its awards. The Pathway Campus has adopted the University's academic regulations for taught programmes.

1.2 The Pathway Campus is managed by the Centre Manager, who reports directly to the Executive Dean at QAHE. The Centre Manager is responsible for managing staff on the Pathway Campus. In view of the small number of students the management structure is relatively compact.

1.3 The Link Tutor is the main point of contact between the University and the Pathway Campus and is responsible for ensuring that the operation and development of the programme is in line with the policies and regulations of the University and the terms of the original or subsequent Memoranda of Agreement. The Link Tutor produces annual reports which are submitted to the University Academic Office. The report for the International Foundation Programme identified the need for staff training in relation to assessment criteria and marking and moderation. This formed part of a staff development session in October.

1.4 The Pathway Campus Board, which includes senior members of staff from the University and QAHE, is responsible for the corporate governance and development of the Pathway Campus. It meets four times a year and is chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost of the University. The Pathway Campus Quality Board, established in June 2017, has oversight of all matters relating to learning and teaching and the quality and standards of the programmes. QAHE has set up the Roehampton Academic Board to strengthen the governance and monitor all academic provision that is shared between QAHE and the University. The Board met for the first time in August 2017.

1.5 The Pathway Campus Quality Board provides a joint forum for the oversight of matters relating to learning and teaching, curriculum development and the quality and standards of the Pathway Campus programmes. It is chaired by a senior member of the University staff. Minutes of the Pathway Campus Quality Board are received by the University's Department of Media, Culture and Language Learning Teaching and Quality Committee, which reports to the University Learning Teaching and Quality Group (LTQG). QAHE also has a Learning and Teaching Committee which is responsible for enhancements to the quality of learning and is currently developing a peer learning project.

1.6 At the operational level the Programme Board reviews the quality of the delivery, including assessment. The Board is chaired by the Campus Pathway Manager and its membership includes staff from QAHE, the University and student representatives

1.7 Programme Annual Reviews (PARs) are undertaken in accordance with the University's requirements and include analysis of statistical data relating to standards and quality including student retention and achievement. The review reports are scrutinised by the Chair of the University Learning and Teaching Quality Group. The Standards, Quality and Enhancement Plan is produced as part of the PAR and this is monitored by the University's Department of Media, Culture and Language Learning Teaching and Quality Committee.

1.8 The Pathway Campus will be subject to the University's Periodic Review process in 2019-20. This takes a longer-term view of the quality and standards of the programmes and provides an opportunity for evaluation, redesign and revalidation of the existing portfolio.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

1.9 The QAHE and the University act as effective external reference points for the Pathway Campus and provide processes and structures for ensuring that standards are maintained.

1.10 As part of the University validation and approvals process, all programmes are mapped to the relevant frameworks. The IFP is mapped to the Qualification and Credit Framework and the Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma are mapped to the FHEQ. The University validation and approval panels include an external member of staff (usually from another HE institution).

1.11 External examiners provide an effective reference point for assessment.

1.12 The Pathway Campus has been accredited by The British Council, which provides a further external reference point.

How effectively does the provider use external moderation, verification or examining to assure academic standards?

1.13 The Pathway Campus has an effective process for external moderation, verification and examining which assures academic standards are met and maintained.

1.14 Initial scrutiny of draft assessments is carried out by QAHE, which has established the Assessment Scrutiny Committee for this purpose. The assessments are then moderated by the University Link Tutor and verified by the external examiners to confirm that they are set at the appropriate level to assure academic standards have been met.

1.15 A sample of scripts is moderated by the University Link Tutor and by the external examiners. Student achievement and progression is considered by the University Assessment Boards which are attended by the Pathway Campus Manager, Link Tutor and external examiners.

1.16 External examiners' reports confirm that standards are equivalent to other higher education institutions. Recommendations made by the external examiners in respect of the assessment load and variation in marks are being addressed through standardisation meetings and minor modifications to the assessments. A summary of the external examiners' comments, responses from the Pathway Campus Manager and the action required is included in the Programme Annual Report (PAR).

<p>The review team concludes that confidence can be placed in Roehampton Pathway Campus's management of its responsibilities for academic standards, as set out in its contractual arrangements with its academic partner.</p>

2 Quality of learning opportunities

How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1 Formal agreements detail the responsibilities of the University and QA Higher Education (QAHE), together with Service Agreements. Responsibility for the student learning experience and assessment rests with the Pathway Campus (the provider) in the day-to-day operation of programmes. The provider is responsible for recruitment, all teaching and, with the University's agreement, the appointment of teaching staff. QAHE makes admissions decisions at conditional and unconditional offer stage with the University retaining control over the process. The IFP student handbook and the prospectus provides comprehensive information on what students may expect, listing programme aims and structure, assessment and feedback, information on resources and facilities, and student support services.

2.2 The provider effectively fulfils its responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities through appropriate management structures and well-defined oversight by the University. Pathway Campus Quality Board (the Board) has responsibility for all matters relating to learning and teaching development and the quality and standards of the Campus Pathway programmes. The Board is chaired by a senior member of staff of the University and has joint membership from the University and QAHE. The QAHE Academic Board, established to manage all aspects of the provider's academic provision receives the provider's Quality Board minutes. The provider monitors its programmes appropriately through the quality assurance and enhancement arrangements that apply to all departments of the University. A Programme Board chaired by the provider's campus Manager is responsible for the Programme Annual Review. Annual reports are considered by University committees and a schedule for periodic review is in place.

2.3 The provider fulfils its responsibilities for enhancing student learning opportunities effectively by systematically reviewing the quality of provision and enacting improvements through consideration by QAHE. Evidence from QAHE learning and teaching minutes and meetings held by the review team confirm that the enhancement of learning opportunities is duly considered. Recent examples of enhancement initiatives include the establishment of new management boards, an enhanced learner support programme and a peer learning initiative.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

2.4 The provider makes effective use of external reference points to manage and enhance learning opportunities, mainly through its relationship with the University. QAHE developed the International Foundation Programme, Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma Pre-Master's Programme, which were approved by the University and are monitored through the University's Programme Annual Review (PAR) process.

2.5 The higher education awards reflect the FHEQ and are informed by the Subject Benchmark Statements for Business and Management (February 2015). The provider currently only delivers the International Foundation Programme at level 3. The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) informs this programme's learning outcomes. The provider also has British Council and British Accreditation Council accreditation.

2.6 The International Admissions Manual describes in detail the admission requirements, English language policy, and the application process including interview

questions. The terms and conditions are fair and transparent and easily accessible by students before, during and after the admissions and enrolment process. The offer letter is clear and unambiguous. This takes full account of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) and Competition and Marketing Authority guidance.

2.7 The University policies apply for academic appeals and student complaints, which follows the principles and operational good practice guidance of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. These policies recommend that students should seek initial advice from the Students' Union. The IFP student handbook includes hyperlinks to the relevant University student policies. Students confirm that this information is clearly signposted and indicate satisfaction with the support received from staff when informal issues are raised. An annual report on complaints is required in the PAR/QAHE Academic Board to enable strategic oversight, although to date there have been no formal complaints.

How effectively does the provider assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

2.8 The quality of teaching and learning is effectively maintained and enhanced through oversight at three levels: campus level, QAHE and University. This is through various methods including PAR reports, managerial observation, external examiners' reports and student feedback. The module descriptors outline the teaching and learning methods. The Pathway Campus Quality Board has oversight on all matters relating to learning and teaching development and the quality and standards of academic provision, with annual reports to the LTQG and QAHE. QAHE maintains direct oversight of the quality of teaching and learning through regular reporting by the QAHE Head of English, who observes teaching. The Campus Manager also conducts teaching observations, which contributes to the enhancement of teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice. The University has oversight of teaching and learning through the Link Tutor and the PAR annual report and Quality Standards and Enhancement Plan which are considered by the University's committees.

2.9 Effective formal and informal methods for student feedback are in place including the Staff-Student Liaison Committee, an end-of-semester survey, personal tutorials and regular access to staff. The student submission and the students met by the team report satisfaction with the quality and variety of teaching and with the helpful teaching staff. The provider has integrated student suggestions into the programme, such as a revised induction session. Current students are positive about the level of preparation for transition to university study and those who have progressed confirm the seamless progression experience. The external examiner comments that there are a wide variety of assessment tasks and approaches.

How effective are the provider's arrangements for staff development in relation to maintaining and/or enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.10 There are effective arrangements for staff development to maintain and enhance the quality of learning opportunities. QAHE have introduced a spreadsheet-based staff development audit process to identify and benchmark development opportunities. Individual staff needs are identified through induction, teaching observations, events and/or changes in operating practices. New teaching staff are observed and undertake a thorough induction, carried out centrally by the QAHE/University with input from the provider. Teaching staff are experienced and well qualified and are able to access a range of opportunities for staff development. This includes access to coaching and the extensive staff development programme at QAHE, to which the provider also contributes. For example, the Campus Manager delivered a workshop on student engagement. The University Link Tutor delivers training sessions to the provider's staff and they are invited to the annual University Learning

and Teaching Conference. There are QAHE staff development opportunities such as the three-day developmental professional courses run by QA Learning. QAHE also funds staff studying for higher degrees.

How effectively does the provider assure itself that students are appropriately and effectively supported?

2.11 The provider has various methods to ensure that students are appropriately and effectively supported. A wide range of formal and informal support mechanisms are available such as study skill support, personal tutorials and pastoral support. The Pathway Campus Manager arranges monthly individual tutorials and drop in sessions for additional academic support. QAHE are introducing an enhanced learner support programme managed by the Academic Community of Excellence (ACE) Team. This is a team of language tutors dedicated to ensuring students engage and remain engaged with their programme at the same time as improving overall levels of attainment. Students also have full access to the University support systems and the Roehampton Academic Achievements Team. This team offers a range of services to support learners, including study skills, use of statistical methods and software as well as advice on how to access and search for academic sources. The Student Handbook details these services and students are introduced to them during induction.

2.12 Students met by the review team confirm that the combination of support arrangements is effective and assists both their learning and the transition to higher education. Those students who had progressed to the University considered that they were better prepared for level 5 study than their University counterparts and that they provided informal peer support to others.

2.13 The University International Office offers support to students at all stages of their relationship with the University, with an active arrival and orientation service including programme induction and social events.

How effectively does the provider ensure that learning resources are accessible and sufficient to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes?

2.14 Students at the provider have full access to the learning resources of the University under the same conditions as other University students. Through the programme approval procedure, the provider ensures that learning resources are accessible and sufficient to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. This process also enables the University to be assured that appropriate provision is in place. The approval documentation required by the University includes written confirmation that resource provision is sufficient. The external examiner reports that the quality and range of learning and teaching materials is generally impressive. The University has responsibility for library, technology support, information services (including the University's virtual learning environment), and the range of administrative services such as student services and finance. The provider provides key texts and work books. Students met by the review team are satisfied with the access and quality of learning resources available for their studies.

The review team concludes that **confidence** can be placed in Roehampton Pathway Campus's management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities.

3 Information

How effective are the provider's arrangements for ensuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy?

3.1 There are effective arrangements for ensuring that information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. QAHE are responsible for the production of marketing materials for the programmes, with oversight and approval from the University. QAHE submits materials produced by QAHE to the Link Tutor and the Director of Communications for final approval. All materials published by QAHE must conform to the requirements of University's Visual Identity Guidelines. The Link Tutor checks student handbooks to ensure consistency with the University standard.

3.2 The Campus Pathway website and the prospectus contain very detailed information about programme structures, support available, visas, exchange opportunities, country advice, accommodation, and application procedures. There are links to minimum entry requirements for each programme, including English language requirements, selection criteria, fees and finance. There are formal admissions complaints and appeals procedures.

3.3 QAHE has responsibility for the admission of students. The Admissions Policy clearly outlines the admission requirements, the application process and English language policy and together with the International Admissions Manual and the websites take account of the Quality Code and Competition and Marketing Authority guidance.

3.4 QAHE use recruitment agents to maximise their student applications. QAHE's recruitment staff train and update these agents by email, telephone calls and at training days. The University and QAHE are each currently undertaking a thorough review of the use and the monitoring of recruitment agents to ensure continued recruitment integrity.

3.5 The written Student Submission, and students who met the review team, report satisfaction with the accuracy and completeness of the information received prior to making an application and throughout their studies. The systems for checking the currency, accuracy and fitness for purpose of the information published by the provider are appropriate and effective.

The review team concludes that **reliance can** be placed on the information that Roehampton Pathway Campus produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to terms that may be used in this report.

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.

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**.

e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning

Embedded college

Colleges, often operating as part of a network, that are embedded on or near the campuses of UK higher education institutions (HEI) and that primarily provide preparatory programmes for higher education

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.

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* (FHEQIS).

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.

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.

Public information

Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

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.

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.

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