



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College, September 2017

Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that RTC Education Ltd t/a Regent College (the College) has made commendable progress with implementing the action plan from the September 2016 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 The College has made some new appointments to the senior management team. In December 2016, the previous Academic Principal was replaced by a Principal for Further and Higher Education; additional new appointments include: a Chief Operating Officer, an Assistant Principal (Higher Education), a Director of Quality (Higher Education) and a Regent Group Head of Human Resources.

3 Student numbers have increased from 1,029 at the time of the last review to 1,336 at the time of the monitoring visit. This represents an increase of 307 students (30 per cent), which is greater than the overall increase of 18 per cent when compared to the previous review, before the September 2017 cohorts started. Additional student numbers include students who transferred to the College from two other institutions to enable them to complete the final year of their HND programmes. The College continues to offer Pearson HND Business courses with a number of specialised pathways available. In September 2016, the College started to deliver the new Pearson HND Business specification.

4 In March 2017, the College gained approval from Pearson to deliver courses at an additional site in Kingsbury, and in May 2017 achieved site designation from HEFCE, which will allow students who study there to apply for student loan funding. Further enhancements are planned to the existing site in Wembley, and at the time of the review visit delivery was not considered to be imminent at Kingsbury.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

5 The College has made commendable progress in implementing the recommendations from the 2016 review and in developing and evaluating its action plan. The College has embedded a range of policies and processes to further develop the pastoral care it provides for students. Equality and diversity are now embedded within policies for staff and students, and the student representation system has been revised to include formal training. All policies are now established within College processes and a systematic approach for the development and implementation of action plans is fully operational.

6 All four outstanding actions from the 2016 action plan have been completed. Progress and monitoring was considered at both the Higher Education Quality Committee and higher education management meetings; completion of actions was confirmed by the Academic Board.

7 The College has developed and implemented a range of policies and processes to ensure that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in relation to pastoral care, and has facilitated appropriate training and development. A Student Pastoral Care Policy was approved by the Academic Board and is available to staff and students on the College virtual learning environment. Job descriptions for key management and academic staff have been revised to include student pastoral care duties; the new role of Assistant Principal (Higher Education) has senior management responsibility and oversight of this policy in operation. This responsibility will pass to the Director for Students when this newly created role becomes fully operational. A Student Pastoral Care Handbook has been developed to provide advice and guidance for staff and students, and staff and students confirmed that this was a valuable resource. The effectiveness of these actions was demonstrated through case studies seen by the review team.

8 The revised Equality and Diversity Policy was approved by the Academic Board in March 2017. The College has recently established an Equality and Diversity Monitoring Group, with the first meeting having taken place in August 2017. To ensure principles of equality and diversity are embedded within College policies, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy and the terms of reference for several formal boards and committees have been revised and reflect the Policy. Students confirmed their awareness of the Policy, and that the College implements appropriate measures as required.

9 The College continues to support students in their role as student representatives (and as Student President), with more formal training and additional support provided to enable student representatives to fulfil their role more effectively. Existing and newly elected student representatives have been fully briefed with training provided by the Assistant Principal (Higher Education). The Student Representative Handbook has been updated to include a section on training and the importance of student representation. The Student President and Vice President are members of the Academic Board, the Quality Enhancement Board and Course Boards. All student representatives attend student representative meetings, which ensures that students are fully engaged in processes for improving their programmes.

10 To ensure a consistent approach to the development and implementation of action plans, the College has produced a progress monitoring report and a recently introduced Action Plan Tracker. These support a revised approach to action plans and include the identification of the overall desired outcomes, with clear measurable targets and key performance indicators and progress/evaluation. In addition, a traffic light system is used to monitor these actions and to highlight where further work may be required. The monitoring reports are updated twice yearly and discussed at Academic Board and higher education management meetings. It is intended that the Action Plan Tracker will improve the overall effectiveness of the College's processes and lead to systematic improvements in the quality of student learning opportunities.

11 The Admissions Policy and flowchart guides practice to ensure that all applications are treated with equity, transparency and fairness. The Policy was reviewed in July 2017 to include CMA requirements, ensure all suitable applicants receive an admissions interview, and to clarify to students the process of registration with Pearson. Prospective students who do not have GCSE English Language at grades A to C are required to demonstrate their proficiency using the College's own assessment of their English language, in the context of their capability to complete an HND. The Access and Participation Statement commits the College to providing fair access and recruiting with integrity, transparency and professionalism. The College monitors each cohort with respect to ethnicity, gender and declared disability through the newly formed Equality and Diversity Monitoring Group to provide oversight of the College's Equality and Diversity Policy.

12 All applicants that meet the entry criteria are invited for an interview conducted by a member of academic staff. The admissions application form includes a personal supporting statement concerning motivation and commitment to study. This is followed up by questioning at interview to assess potential to succeed.

13 Pearson undertakes an annual review of programmes through the Academic Management Review process. The most recent review visit took place in June 2017 and the outcome letter and report concluded that there are no essential actions required. The College is also required to submit an Annual Programme Monitoring Report using Pearson's template. The 2015-16 report is comprehensive and fully meets Pearson's requirements. There is detailed consideration of all matters relating to the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, including external examiner reports and student data.

14 In addition to Pearson's requirements the College produces its own Annual Course Quality Monitoring report (ACQM). The ACQM considers issues arising from all relevant action plans, including those following awarding organisation and QAA visits. The report includes summary information on student achievement and any awards made, together with data on progression, withdrawal and failure. The reports are comprehensive in providing a detailed oversight of the quality of student learning experiences, and the action plans support the approach to enhancement. The ACQM is considered at higher education management meetings, and by the Quality Committee and Academic Board.

15 The College does not consider achievement rates to be final until three years after the course start date; therefore, results for the 2014-15 cohort are still considered pending. At the time of the monitoring visit, of the 173 students recruited during 2014-15, 73 (42 per cent) have achieved the qualification and 52 (30 per cent) are recorded as continuing. The College's achievement target for this cohort is 70 per cent. The College has introduced a number of measures to support students, including students who are trailing modules (legacy students), to achieve. This includes the establishment of the Retention Achievement and Completion group, which meets monthly to consider the retention, completion and achievement rates of each cohort.

16 Cohort leaders have responsibility for retention, achievement and completion; monitoring; and follow-up actions, including providing support to legacy students to submit or resubmit outstanding coursework. The work undertaken by the RAC group has resulted in improved student retention, achievement and completion and has enabled legacy student cohorts to achieve an award. Targets for achievement for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 cohorts are 75 per cent and 80 per cent respectively, and data shows that the College is likely to achieve these targets in a timely manner with the monitoring and support arrangements that have been implemented.

Section 4: Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education

17 The College clearly aligns its teaching and learning activities to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and the requirements of Pearson, and demonstrates highly effective engagement with external reference points. It has mapped its policies, procedures and programmes to the Quality Code and has used this to conduct a number of detailed mappings against Expectations. This enabled the College to identify further enhancements to policy and practice. These actions have resulted in improvements being made to processes for recruitment, selection and admission; student development and achievement; student engagement and the assessment of students. The College has also developed a brief guide to the Quality Code for all staff, which is available in the Quality Manual and on the virtual learning environment. All policies and handbooks included in

the Quality Manual, and the mapping to the Quality Code, are reviewed on an annual basis and updated where relevant. Teaching staff are familiar with the precepts of the Quality Code and use this to promote enhancement activities. There is a procedure for published information, and information seen by the review team was fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

18 There was a Pearson Academic Management Review, and a visit by the external examiner, in June 2017. Both visits were successful, with positive reports and no essential actions identified. Any recommendations from previous visits were signed off. These processes confirm that delivery is in line with UK expectations and assure Pearson of the setting and maintenance of academic standards. Teaching staff clearly understand the processes required by Pearson and use these to improve the quality of learning opportunities.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

19 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

20 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Peter Hymans, Reviewer, and Dr Suzanne Richardson, Coordinator, on 2 November 2017.

QAA2030 - R9791 - Dec 17

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2017
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel 01452 557050
Web www.qaa.ac.uk