



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of St John's College Nottingham, March 2015

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 St John's College Nottingham (the College) has made commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [previous monitoring visit](#) in June 2014.

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 In common with a number of other theological education institutions St John's is transferring most of its undergraduate provision to the Church of England Ministry Division Common Awards Framework validated by the University of Durham (the University) from its previous partner the University of Chester.

3 The College has embarked on a major review of its curriculum, modes of delivery, staffing establishment and estate resulting in a plan for a simpler and more compact provision. As a result residential training is being phased out and recruitment to some University-validated undergraduate programmes will be halted for a year from September 2015 while the curriculum is restructured. The decline in the numbers of higher education students noted in previous reports has continued with 306 students in 2014-15 compared with 334 the previous year. Staffing levels have declined slightly with one less full-time and one additional part-time post.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The College has made commendable progress on the recommendations in the 2012 Review for Educational Oversight report. It has evaluated the impact of the implementation of the action plan and demonstrates appropriate oversight of academic standards and the quality of students' learning opportunities. The College has fully implemented its revised management and committee structure. The post of Academic Director, resulting from the combination of two previous posts, has been filled. Peer observation of teaching is embedded at the College, which results in a summary report and feeds into staff appraisal and development.

5 The assessment process is well managed with the provision of staff training events for marking standards and consistency of feedback to students. Marking standardisation events take place twice a year and university staff attend college Assessment Boards. Students' assessed work is normally returned within four weeks following the submission deadline. Assessed work deadlines for the academic year are provided in a schedule which includes dates for feedback to students. To date, return of marked work has met stated deadlines. Students report high levels of satisfaction with the assessment process, and timely return of marked work. Student greatly value the helpful and detailed feedback provided in written form and subsequent access to tutors, should any further clarification be needed.

6 The University of Durham's Common Awards curriculum framework has been fully and successfully implemented by the College. College staff have attended consultative events hosted by the University. Change to the curriculum, and delivery, across modules, has taken place to ensure the College meets the requirements of the Common Awards

Framework. Communication of the changes and consultation over them has been effective and well received.

7 Admissions to courses within the Common Awards curriculum framework have taken place according to the College's admissions policy and procedure. The College's admissions policy has been approved by the University. Information provided to students before the start of their course is appropriate and informs them about the course and the demands of study.

8 Communication to staff and students during a period of significant change for the College has been effective. Students are represented at all levels in the College with the Student President being a full member of Council. This has ensured that the student body as a whole is informed of changes in a timely and helpful manner resulting in a strong community at the College.

9 The College manages academic standards and the quality and enhancement of learning opportunities effectively and fully meets the requirements of its partner awarding universities. The College has effective systems in place to ensure that there is appropriate oversight of academic activities and to ensure quality enhancement is integrated into its quality processes.

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

10 The College aligns its provision with the requirements of the Ministry Division of the Church of England. This constitutes an essential external benchmark for the College's programmes. These are now articulated through the Common Awards Framework which is validated by the University. Standards of provision and assessment have been mapped by the University against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) and the College is responsive to these requirements.

11 The College has cross-referenced its strategic development plan to the Quality Code and is ensuring that its relevant sections are considered as the College's policies and practices are reviewed or developed. A mapping exercise has been carried out for the University of Chester to ensure alignment with the Quality Code.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

12 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.

13 The monitoring visit was carried out by Dr John Hurley (Coordinator) and Professor Donald Pennington (Reviewer) on 04 March 2015.

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