



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Tertiary Education Services Ltd trading as New College of the Humanities, February 2016

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 Tertiary Education Services Ltd trading as New College of the Humanities (the College) has made commendable progress with implementing the action plan from the February 2015 [Higher Education Review \(Plus\)](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 Since the last QAA review the College has commenced delivery of a range of programmes validated by Southampton Solent University. The total student numbers are stable. At the time of the 2015 Review there were 141 full-time students on undergraduate degrees of the University of London International Programmes. There are now 140 students, of whom 103 are continuing on programmes of the University of London, and 37 on the programmes validated by Southampton Solent University.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The College has thoroughly addressed the recommendations of the 2015 Review through its action plan. For example, the College very clearly communicates that the New College of the Humanities Diploma (the Diploma) is a non-credit bearing award (see paragraph 4). There is highly effective representation and regular monitoring of the collective student voice at all levels of the organisational structure (see paragraph 5). The College has undertaken significant development of annual programme monitoring procedures using quantitative and qualitative data (see paragraph 6). The College documentation clearly reports the highly effective actions, in light of which the review team concludes that the College is making commendable progress.

4 The College very clearly communicates through a variety of channels that the Diploma is a non-credit bearing award. The College website and prospectus explicitly state that the Diploma is non-credit bearing, as does the certificate of study. Students confirmed that they have access to the Diploma regulations on the virtual learning environment (VLE), and that they had received an email in May 2015 referring to the non-credit status of the award. First-year students stated that this was explained during the admissions and interview process. The staff document Writing References for Student Guidelines includes the status of the Diploma so that staff can explain to prospective employers. The College continues to review these measures.

5 There is highly effective representation and regular monitoring of the collective student voice at all levels of the College. The College, together with the Students' Union, has developed a Student Engagement Policy to formalise the extensive staff-student relationships within the College. The Students' Union elects a representative onto the College's Academic Board to engage with the College on behalf of the student body at institutional level. Students routinely attend Student-Staff Liaison Committees and are represented at faculty staff meetings. The College's relationship with The Student

Engagement Partnership (TSEP) enables students to be trained in representational skills and for the processes of student representation to be externally reviewed. The Students' Union intends to obtain formal feedback from the student body about student representation by March 2016. The students who met the review team said that they were very satisfied with their engagement, and with the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

6 The College has undertaken significant development of annual programme monitoring procedures to ensure consistency and monitor formally agreed actions. The Annual Programme Monitoring Reports consider the previous action plan, review each module, consider student feedback and evaluate recruitment, achievement and retention data. The Reports use a standard template and are peer-reviewed by Heads of Faculty to identify good practice and to ensure consistency. The impact of the annual monitoring process is evaluated by the Academic Board, which develops an overall action plan with a web-based system for monitoring progress and completion.

7 In the 2015 Review the College received an affirmation relating to the development of the assessment practice document and related policies. The assessment practice information is now in place and has been shared extensively with all staff and students. Teaching staff attended two assessment training sessions prior to the commencement of the 2015-16 academic year. A subsequent training session with contributions from a Southampton Solent University link tutor was held in January 2016. In discussions with the review team, staff demonstrated that they understood fully the academic regulations and assessment practices. Students also stated that they understand the regulations. All information on assessment has been shared with students, clarified at induction, and is available on the VLE.

8 The College has successfully maintained and developed the good practice of the 2015 Review. The research culture continues to develop and be embedded within the student learning experience. The Teaching and Learning Strategy and the learning outcomes in Programme Specifications demonstrate the development of this research culture. Staff and students gave the review team examples of how the research and interdisciplinary learning enhance students' learning opportunities. Research and scholarship underpin teaching; academic staff continue to be research active, with regular publication of books and academic articles, and have the opportunity to apply for College academic scholarships and research leave. Career progression is linked to research activity. The responsibilities of the Research Officer include promotion of the College's research profile and the development of external funding opportunities. Students reported that they participate in dissertation presentation days, are able to present extended essays, and attend staff research seminars. They may also attend lectures given by the extended professoriate of notable visiting professors and meetings of learned societies held at the College.

9 The extensive tutorial system effectively supports learning and teaching. The College continues to be committed to the weekly one-to-one academic tutorial programme to underpin curriculum delivery. The systematic process for termly review of individual performance remains in place. Faculty discussions involve students and inform the content, approach and development of tutorials, ensuring they remain effective. Each student has access to a personal tutor whom they meet in fresher's week and once each term. The students also have access to a Student Wellbeing Coordinator and a Student Welfare Officer (an externally trained student). Students told the review team that they value this academic and pastoral support.

10 The innovative opportunities provided by the Diploma for interdisciplinary learning are still an important feature of the curriculum at the College and are appreciated by

students. This is shown in the student surveys and the Student-Staff Liaison Committees. The Diploma has been adapted and developed in response to student feedback. The opportunities for interdisciplinary learning have developed further, so that the minor courses within the new Southampton Solent University degrees are in a different subject to that of the student's major course. The Careers Guidance, Internships and Work-Based Learning Policy now formalises the students' individual personalised career counselling sessions. The College has strengthened the Professional Programme by establishing an Advisory Board, which aims to provide mentoring, internships and project judgement to enrich student learning opportunities. All students currently have access to regular sessions from visiting fellows and organisations, who enhance the students' awareness and employability skills. Student feedback for the Professional Programme is extremely positive.

11 The College has thorough recruitment, selection and admission policies, which are transparent, reliable, valid and inclusive. The College's website and prospectus clearly detail the application process, together with all policies. Students confirm that their experience of admissions and interview was clear and supportive. The College's trained admissions team interviews each applicant using guidance notes and an assessment template. The faculty maps students' entry qualifications to their degree outcome to assess validity of the process. The annual Admissions Review reports to the Academic Board. The College ensures students have sufficient English language competence to complete their programme of study by the entry requirements, the standard interview and a written assessment. This approach, together with the personal statement to explain their choice of programme and institution, enables the College to assess an applicant's genuine intention to study.

12 Achievement rates for the 2015 graduating year show 25 per cent of graduates achieving First Class Honours, and 58 per cent achieving Upper Second Class Honours, with an average pass rate of 82 per cent. The BA History had a 100 per cent pass rate, whereas the LLB Law programme with similarly small numbers (11) had a retention rate of 55 per cent and a pass rate of 67 per cent. Following consultation with students and scrutiny of examination results, the College identified staffing as the main reason for the lower retention and pass rates on the LLB Law programme. The College has subsequently implemented wide-ranging actions, including staff changes, extra tutorials and a meeting with the awarding body to improve these rates. The retention and pass rates for this programme will continue to need monitoring.

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

13 The College continues to make full use of external reference points in the management of the academic standards and quality of its courses. It engages fully and appropriately with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) through its partnership with Southampton Solent University, and by mapping policies, procedures and practices to the Quality Code.

14 In 2015 the College won the Whatuni Student Choice Award for Course and Lecturers, and was nominated in the category University of the Year. These awards are student-initiated, and demonstrate how positive the student body is about the learning and teaching received.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

15 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.

16 The monitoring visit was carried out by Catherine Fairhurst, Coordinator, and Mike Slawin, Reviewer, on 10 February 2016.

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