



# Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) of UCFB College of Football Business Ltd

## Partial Review

April 2020

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## About this review

This is a report on a Partial Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at UCFB College of Football Business Ltd. The review took place from 26 February to 27 April 2020 and was conducted by Dr Sally Bentley.

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)<sup>1</sup> 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.

This was a partial review following an original review undertaken in June 2019, which resulted in a published report. The QAA review team made a judgement on one area requiring improvement: the quality of the provider's information about learning opportunities.

In Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) 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. This was completed in 2019 and does not form part of this partial review.

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

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is published at: [www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code)

<sup>2</sup> QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers): [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/higher-education-review](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/higher-education-review)

## Key findings

### Judgements

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

- The quality of the provider's information about learning opportunities **meets** UK expectations.

### Good practice

The QAA review team did not note any areas of good practice.

### Recommendations

The QAA review team made no recommendations.

### Affirmation of action being taken

The QAA review team affirms the actions already being taken to make academic standards secure and/or improve the educational provision offered to students.

### Financial sustainability, management and governance

The financial sustainability, management and governance check has been satisfactorily completed in 2019.

## About the provider

UCFB College of Football Business Ltd (UCFB) is an approved College of Buckinghamshire New University (BNU). It was granted University Campus title by the Department for Education (DfE) in March 2018.

UCFB's mission is 'To provide best in class graduates with football, sport and business expertise'. This mission is underpinned by UCFB's vision, which is 'To be the world's leading provider of excellence for football business and the wider sports education'.

UCFB offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees with a suite of BA (Hons) and MSc programmes at the Etihad Campus in Manchester and Wembley Campus in London, supported through an academic partnership with Buckinghamshire New University.

There are currently 2,079 students enrolled at UCFB - 864 are enrolled at the Etihad campus and 1,215 at the Wembley campus - with a further 26 enrolled on an MSc International Sports Management programme. Students are taught by a total of 67 staff, 13 of whom are part-time.

UCFB aims to provide each student with the opportunity to study an academic subject, engage with inspirational role models and gain unique opportunities within the context of an industry for which they have a genuine passion and interest, while ensuring full transferability of education skills and experience. UCFB has nurtured relationships with football and sports industries with organisations such as the Premier League, Scottish Professional Football League, Football League, the Football Association, Umbro, BBC Sport, ITV Sport and Sky Sports, and aims to support the transition of a student to becoming an active, skilled member of the workforce and realising their aspirations.

UCFB was subject to a full Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) (HER(AP)) by QAA in June 2019, and is the subject of a published report. The review led to a recommendation that, by October 2019, UCFB review its processes for the management of the quality of information about learning opportunities to ensure information is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy (Expectation Part C). UCFB produced a detailed action plan to address the recommendation and monitor its progress.

UCFB has subsequently reviewed its strategic and operational management for the production, presentation and publication of information and provided a self-evaluation progress report, along with additional supporting information, for consideration by the review team. As the partial review relates to a single judgement area requiring improvement, the team was able to conduct a desk-based analysis. No meetings were held with students or staff, and the conclusions presented in this report are based on the analysis of documentary evidence submitted by the provider.

## Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

### 1 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

1.1 UCFB provides a wide range of information for prospective students and the public. The UCFB Public Information Committee (PIC) is responsible for ensuring that all information is scrutinised prior to publication and addition to the website and the virtual learning environment (VLE). The Buckinghamshire New University (the University) revised Operations Manual sets out the responsibilities and procedures to ensure that all marketing and advertising material published by UCFB is correct and that an audit trail is maintained. Information is published both in hardcopy and electronically, including through the use of social media.

1.2 The published material provides comprehensive information on all stages of the student journey, including recruitment, admissions, enrolment and on-course information, through to graduation. Additional information provides further support in ensuring that the requirements for the academic standards of programme delivery and student achievement are met.

1.3 The Public Information Committee (PIC) is responsible for scrutinising the UCFB marketing strategy and future plans, which are then approved by the Executive Board. The PIC's terms of reference, constitution and membership were revised in September 2019. Committee members now include all departments of UCFB, Buckinghamshire New University's Marketing Department and student representatives. Meetings are held on a quarterly basis with extraordinary meetings if required. There is a clear procedure for checking published information, with designated members of staff from each department being responsible for the verification of specific areas of the website. UCFB sends all new materials to the University for approval as outlined in the Operations Manual. The processes in place allow the Expectation to be met.

1.4 The review team conducted a desk-based analysis considering information published on UCFB's website, other marketing publications, related policies and procedures and the minutes of the Public Information Committee (PIC), to test whether information for prospective students and the public is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy. The team did not consider information published to students already enrolled, nor information for staff. The team did not hold meetings with staff or students

1.5 The UCFB website, which was new at the time of the previous review in 2019, is now well established and works effectively in providing readily accessible information. Each webpage, the prospectuses, programme specifications and other standalone marketing materials acknowledge that UCFB is an affiliated college of Buckinghamshire New University and works in partnership with them as the awarding body.

1.6 The website is clear about additional qualifications which are included in some programmes of study. For example, the Football Association Level 1 Coaching Award is embedded within the BA (Hons) Football Coaching and Management programme, and marketing materials make clear that there may be other extra or co-curricular opportunities available.

1.7 UCFB works primarily within the requirements of the academic policies and procedures established by the University. These are readily available to students and staff through the UCFB website in the policies and procedures section. In addition, UCFB has established its own policies and procedures, where appropriate, in line with the responsibilities they have as a partner of the University. The UCFB website contains a set of internal policies, including those on admissions, the use of CCTV, and statements on equality and diversity, and information on how to make a complaint. Information is published on all aspects of the student journey including fees and finance, along with comprehensive information about the courses offered at UCFB.

1.8 The Public Information Committee's (PIC) revised remit and terms of reference are now operational and effective in practice, with both regular quarterly meetings and several extraordinary meetings being held, specifically recently in relation to the approval of the postgraduate prospectus. The activity of the PIC will ensure that information continues to be fit for purpose and trustworthy.

1.9 Overall, the review team concludes that UCFB has appropriate policies and procedures in place. Following the recommendation of the 2019 review, UCFB has taken robust action to ensure a more strategic approach to the development, application and implementation of its scrutiny processes. The revised processes for the production and verification of information are effective in ensuring the fitness for purpose, accessibility and trustworthiness of the information provided for their intended audiences.

1.10 Therefore, the review team concludes that the Expectation is met and the risk is low.

**Expectation: Met**  
**Level of risk: Low**

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

1.12 In reaching its judgement the review team matched its finding against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook. The Expectation is met and the associated risk is low. There are no good practice features, affirmations or recommendations in this judgement area.

1.13 The review team concludes that the quality of information about student learning opportunities at the provider **meets** UK expectations.

## 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 21-24 of the [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\) handbook](#).

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on reviewing higher education: [www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education)

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer Glossary on the QAA website: [www.qaa.ac.uk/glossary](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/glossary)

### 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.

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