

## Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, June 2013

### Annex 12: University of Stirling International Study Centre

#### Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the monitoring team concludes that University of Stirling International Study Centre (USISC) is making acceptable progress following the May 2012 [Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight](#).

#### Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 It has been agreed between Bellerbys Educational Services (BES) and the University of Stirling that USISC will close at the end of August 2013.

#### Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 USISC continues to provide a high level of academic and pastoral support for students. Since the review, the Academic and Personal Development Planning (APDP) tutor has led an initiative to share good practice in APDP across the network, through delivery of staff development at other ISCs and uploading materials to the provider's virtual learning environment. High quality staff development continues and SISC staff continue to engage with structured networking arrangements across the ISCs.

4 USISC has taken effective action on both USISC-specific recommendations made in the QAA 2012 review report annex. A system is in place to ensure scrutiny of annual monitoring reports and the follow-up of ISC action plans by the ISC Academic Management Board and the ISC's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Group. Programme and module assessment boards now clearly identify individual students.

5 A Form of Variation to the original inter-institutional agreement makes clear that the University is responsible for the academic standards of the Undergraduate Certificate and Diploma and the Pre-Masters Programme and that BES is responsible for the academic standards of the English Language Preparatory Programme. USISC has produced a glossary of terms defining the meanings of academic standards-related terms and is applying these consistently. USISC has acted on advice from BES concerning alignment of the assessment regulations with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). Student handbooks contain an abridged version of the assessment regulations; these handbooks mention the Centre Handbook which includes the full set of regulations and is available for consultation in the ISC office.

6 As noted in paragraph 2, USISC is to close at the end of August 2013. The monitoring team found that all staff had worked hard to ensure that the student experience was not diminished during the final year of operation, and managers had taken effective steps to inform and support teaching staff. Arrangements for the support of students who have not completed their programmes at that stage have been formally agreed

in outline between the institutions, but it was not clear how the regulatory provisions for resitting or restarting programmes would work in practice.

7 Regular updates and checks on the provision of accurate website information have been put in place through meetings and monthly email communications between the Marketing Manager for the ISCs and the USISC Head of Centre. Students confirmed that information provided before and at entry was accurate and helpful.

#### **Section 4: The embedded colleges' use of external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education**

8 USISC has made use of the Quality Code in enhancing its provision, including the use of plagiarism detection software for formative assessment purposes; training and support for academic and personal development planning; student engagement; and the extension of information-gathering from students.

#### **Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit**

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

10 The monitoring visit was carried out by Alan Hunt, QAA Officer, and Dr Sylvia Hargreaves, Reviewer, on 24 April 2013.