



Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd

Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

May 2012

Annex 13: Wales International Study Centre

Introduction and background

The Wales International Study Centre (WISC), situated at the University of Wales, Newport (the University), was established in 2008. It delivers an International Foundation Year (Business and Law; Engineering and Science), International Year 1 (Business), and a Pre-Master's in Business, all of which are validated by the University, and an English Language Preparation Programme.

Students who successfully complete the programmes and who achieve the required progression grades are able to progress to a programme at undergraduate or master's level in a number of higher education institutions in Wales and beyond.

The responsibilities of the University and Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd are set out in an inter-institutional validation agreement. Arrangements for the use of premises and facilities at the University are set out in a separate and inter-institutional agreement between the University and Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd.

The ultimate responsibility for the academic standards of the programmes currently rests with the University. Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, through the ISC, is responsible for the day-to-day management of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. The inter-institutional agreement states that the University is responsible for public information, although this responsibility is not well understood at WISC (see paragraph 19).

Key findings

Academic standards

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that there can be **confidence** that academic standards at the Wales International Study Centre are managed appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (and of the University where appropriate).

Quality of learning opportunities

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that there can be **confidence** that the quality of learning opportunities at the Wales International Study Centre is assured and enhanced appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (and of the University where appropriate).

Public information

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the Wales International Study Centre is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The review noted the following **feature of good practice** at this embedded college:

- the support provided to students in connection with progression arrangements to universities in Wales (paragraph 12).

Recommendations

The review team makes the following recommendation in relation to this college.

The review team considers that it is **advisable** for WISC to:

- ensure that offer letters contain accurate information about the awarding bodies (paragraph 17).

Detailed findings

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and WISC fulfil responsibilities for the management of academic standards at this college?

1 The review found that Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd partially fulfils its responsibilities for the management of academic standards at this ISC, in accordance with the framework established in the agreement with the University. This agreement was not clearly drafted in all respects: in particular, it does not follow the normal pattern of agreements made by Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, whereby Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd enters into agreements in its own name and not in the name of the individual centre. Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd will no doubt wish to ensure consistent use of its established practice in this regard.

2 The team found that the ISC is partially complying with the requirements of the University and of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd with regard to programme validation and changes to programmes and modules. However, it was not always clear to both parties that the processes were fully complied with. The University believed that its validation process for the international foundation year had been completed in October 2011. The ISC considered that this was not the case and decided to take the programme to the University for validation in May 2012. Meanwhile, four students had been enrolled on the programme before it was validated. See main report, paragraph 1.11.

3 With respect to annual monitoring, the team concluded that the ISC is complying with reporting requirements of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and the partner university. See main report, paragraph 1.12.

How effective is the management of student assessment?

4 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd manages the assessment of students effectively, in accordance with the requirements agreed with the partner university. See main

report, paragraphs 1.15 - 1.21.

How effectively are UK external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

5 Apart from the matters addressed in paragraphs 1-2, UK external reference points are used effectively in the management of academic standards. See main report, paragraphs 1.22 - 1.26.

How effectively are external examining, moderation, or verification used to assure academic standards?

6 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd makes effective use of external examining, moderation or verification to assure academic standards. See main report, paragraphs 1.27 - 1.33.

How effectively is statistical information used to monitor and assure academic standards?

7 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd makes effective use of statistical information to monitor and assure academic standards. See main report, paragraphs 1.34 - 1.39.

How effectively are responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities fulfilled?

8 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd fulfils its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities at this ISC effectively. See main report, paragraphs 2.1 - 2.4.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

9 Appropriate sections of the *Code of practice* are used effectively in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities. See main report, paragraphs 2.5 - 2.6.

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and WISC assure themselves that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

10 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd assures itself effectively that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained at this ISC. See main report, paragraphs 2.7 - 2.11.

How is student feedback used to assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

11 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's expectations with regard to student feedback are met through the effective use of questionnaires and students' elected representatives. See main report, paragraphs 2.12 - 2.16.

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and WISC assure themselves that students are supported effectively?

12 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd fulfils its obligations for the support of students at WISC effectively. See main report, paragraphs 2.17 - 2.21. Students particularly appreciate the high level of care taken in supporting their applications and progression to the universities with which there are progression arrangements. The review team identified this as a feature of good practice.

How effectively does WISC manage the recruitment and admission of students?

13 Recruitment and admission of students to WISC are managed centrally by Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, and these processes are generally effective. See main report, paragraphs 2.22 - 2.26.

What are the arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

14 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's arrangements for staff development are applied effectively at WISC. See main report, paragraphs 2.27 - 2.32.

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and WISC ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?

15 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, through its agreement with the University, manages the provision of learning resources effectively. See main report, paragraphs 2.33 - 2.37.

How effectively does Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides at this college?

16 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's public information generally communicates effectively to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides at this ISC. See main report, paragraphs 3.1 - 3.3.

17 However, letters to prospective students, offering places at this ISC, misleadingly referred to the University awards and not to the full range of awards available to students. Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd is advised to ensure that offer letters contain accurate information about the awarding bodies.

How effective are the Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing at this college?

18 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd generally works effectively with the University to provide accurate information about its higher education provision at this ISC. See main report, paragraphs 3.4 - 3.7.

19 However, the review team found that responsibilities for public information are not clearly understood at WISC, where it was told that the ISC was responsible for public

information, although the inter-institutional agreement states that all promotional information requires the written approval of the University. Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd should ensure that all concerned at WISC understand the University's ultimate responsibility for public information and act accordingly.

Action plan

Wales International Study Centre action plan relating to the Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight May 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following area of good practice that is worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the support provided to students in connection with progression arrangements to universities in Wales (paragraph 12). 	Determine what elements of the good practice identified at WISC are transferable to other parts of the ISC network and, where appropriate, share good practice with other centres, with a view to maintaining and improving support systems to help students with their applications, leading to higher numbers of students successfully progressing to higher education institutions partners	Ongoing through 2012-13	Current BES Head of Centre WISC and the University	<p>Good practice identified at WISC has been considered centrally by BES and any transferable good practice identified</p> <p>A facility for dissemination of good practice to other ISCs has been identified and put into practice</p> <p>Good practice has, where appropriate, been picked up by other centres and embedded in their</p>	<p>At BES: Regional Director, ISCQAEC, Teaching and Learning Committee, Deputy Principal and Principal UK ISCs</p> <p>At University of Wales, Newport: Steering Committee through annual monitoring report</p>	<p>Progression rates to higher education institution partners meet agreed targets</p> <p>Student feedback on the support that they receive in progressing to universities is positive</p> <p>ISC staff feedback on the transfer process is positive</p> <p>Feedback from universities to which WISC</p>

				practices		students progress is positive concerning the support students receive with the progression arrangements Evaluation of the above indicators to be reported to ISCQAEC
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is advisable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that offer letters contain accurate information about the awarding bodies (paragraph 17). 	<p>All offer letters revised to reflect the fact that students on programmes from September 2012 can progress to any of the university partners in Wales</p> <p>Links to the web pages give detailed progression information</p> <p>Student feedback instruments will check whether information</p>	<p>August 2012</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Head of Centre, Regional Director	All offer letters to stipulate clearly progression options and accurate information about the awarding bodies	Principal ISCs, ISCQAEC, ISCSMT	<p>Applicants and those accepting offers are satisfied that the information they receive is accurate, as evidenced by positive response to feedback</p> <p>ISCQAEC to receive report</p> <p>Evaluation of the above feedback</p>

	received by applicants and those with offers is accurate					to be reported to ISCSMT and Steering Committee
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Key to Action Plan:

BES: Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd

ISCSMT: International Study Centres Senior Management Team

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