

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

Annex 13: Wales 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 Wales International Study Centre (WISC) is making acceptable progress following the May 2012 [Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 All programmes at WISC are now validated by the University of South Wales. However, Bellerbys Educational Services (BES) and the University have decided that WISC will close at the end of August 2013.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 WISC has built on the good practice identified in the QAA 2012 review report. One specific area of good practice was reported at WISC: the way in which students are supported in connection with their progression arrangements to partner universities. This good practice has been continued, and students met by the review team were positive about the ways in which they were helped in their applications to partner universities. This included counselling at weekly meetings with each student on the choices available to them, visits to the partner universities, and discussions with students from previous years who had successfully progressed. The Head of WISC has also disseminated the good practice to other heads of centre.

4 WISC has also continued the good practice identified at provider level in the 2012 review report, and has built on it to some extent. Students are positive about the quality of academic and pastoral support provided. Staff appreciate the staff development opportunities provided by WISC, and also by BES through the network of ISCs. Development of the peer observation scheme was particularly noted.

5 WISC has responded to the recommendations in the QAA 2102 review report. There was one advisable recommendation to WISC, that all offer letters should contain accurate information about the higher education institutions to which students can progress. All offer letters now reflect the fact that students on programmes from September 2012 can progress to any of the centre's University partners in Wales, and to its single partner in England, subject to achieving the required grades. There are also links to the WISC web page for more details about progression requirements. Letters no longer refer to the University of Wales.

6 WISC has also responded to all the overall provider recommendations in the 2102 report. The contract has been amended so that responsibilities for academic standards are now clearly defined. A glossary of academic standards-related terminology has been

produced; it was given to all staff teaching on the programmes but was not in the staff handbook. Assessment regulations are made available to students in the student handbook, and are also in the centre handbook for staff.

7 BES standard procedures for checking and confirming the accuracy of information provided for sign-off by the University are working effectively. Students confirmed that information given to them before entry was full and accurate.

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

8 The UK Quality Code for Higher Education has been used by WISC as its main external reference point. Considerable effort has been put into its understanding and communication. Staff are kept informed of any changes at staff meetings, and there is regular email communication of any updates.

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 Professor Alan Jago, Reviewer, on 10 May 2013.