

Review for Specific Course Designation: report of the monitoring visit at West London College of Business & Management Sciences - Manchester Campus Ltd, November 2014

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 the West London College of Business & Management Sciences - Manchester Campus Ltd (the College) has made acceptable progress with implementing the action plan from the November 2013 [Review for Specific Course Designation](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 There have been no changes in College ownership, premises or programmes delivered since the 2013 adapted Review for Specific Course Designation. The academic staff base is stable. There has been a small increase in the number of students studying at level 4 and above from 37 in 2013 to 41 at the time of the monitoring visit.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The College has built on the good practice identified in the 2013 report. It has arranged workshops for students led by a representative from the International Student Society in Manchester and the link with the Society has been extended to provide them with opportunities for engagement with the wider Manchester student community. The College Student Welfare Officer has ensured that students are aware of the opportunities provided by the Society and they value the social events, visits and related activities which are made available to them.

4 The College has made acceptable progress with implementing the recommendations arising from the 2013 review although they are not yet fully embedded in College practice and in some cases await evaluation. Opportunities for student involvement in quality assurance and enhancement processes have been extended. All College committees now have student representation except when confidential matters are under consideration, such as assessment decisions. A single elected student representative currently provides a point of contact for the small student body and this arrangement is effective in providing student input into quality enhancement processes. However, the College recognises that it will be necessary to increase the number of student representatives if the College recruits greater student numbers.

5 The College has completed a comprehensive review of its committee structures and their terms of reference. There are now four committees dealing with academic matters, quality assurance, staff-student liaison and examinations and assessment. The College operates a flat committee structure with no overarching senior committee or board. The committees report to the Principal and while there is a clearly defined division of responsibilities, an evaluation of the effectiveness of these structures will only take place once a full cycle of meetings has been completed. Although formal committee minutes are recorded in some instances these lack detail and do not fully capture discussion points.

6 The College has made acceptable progress on the implementation of more formal processes for the consideration of external examiner reports. The committees consider the content of the reports in relation to their specified terms of reference, but as noted there is no senior committee which takes an overview. This is also the case with annual monitoring and review. Instead, the Principal and senior staff meet to identify common features, gaps and necessary actions arising from external reports and meet with staff to implement an action plan, but these meetings are not minuted. Examples of improvements resulting from the implementation of this process include the redesign of documentation and the provision of fuller formative and summative feedback on assessed work. External examiners' reports are available to students on the virtual learning environment, although students are not aware of this.

7 The College has implemented the 2013 report recommendation to routinely employ plagiarism-detection software although there is scope to extend its utility as a learning resource. Students are well informed about plagiarism and unfair means and recognise the need to observe good academic practice.

8 Acceptable progress in meeting action points relating to the accuracy of public information and checking procedures has been made by the College. All published materials accurately reflect current awarding organisation specifications. The College has removed references on its website to accreditation arrangements not currently in operation and a pilot website for online learning for which it had not received validation from an awarding body or organisation.

9 The College has enhanced the effectiveness of its staff development policy, prioritising improvement of the teaching skills and qualifications of its staff as identified in College observations and awarding organisation reports.

10 The College has taken effective action to disaggregate and clarify the appeals and complaints procedures in place although some inconsistency remains between versions in published documents and their electronic equivalent.

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

11 The College has developed a Quality Manual which brings together its various policies relating to academic standards, quality and information and which aims to incorporate the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) although a systematic mapping exercise has yet to be undertaken. College policies are categorised according to whether they deal with student, administrative or quality matters. Relevant Chapters of the Quality Code are used to inform College policies, including for example *B5: Student Engagement*, *B7: External Examining* and *B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*. The College recognises that it needs to be more proactive in quality matters as, for example, the customisation of its programme handbooks. The extent to which the Quality Code is fully embedded in College procedures and practices is likely to form a focus of interest in a future review. The College has gained Investors in People accreditation.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

12 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.

13 The monitoring visit was carried out by Professor Nicholas Goddard, Coordinator, and Dr Glenn Barr, Reviewer, on 24 November, 2014.

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