



## Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of UCK Ltd t/a The London College, April 2018

### 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 UCK Ltd t/a The London College (the College) has made commendable progress in continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision since the April 2017 [Annual Monitoring Visit](#).

### 2 Changes since the last QAA review/monitoring visit

2 Student numbers have dropped a little (eight per cent) since the last monitoring visit. There are 883 students enrolled on programmes at the College, including 133 registered on the six final-year, top-up degree programmes franchised by the University of Derby (the University). The remaining 750 students are following Pearson HNC and HND programmes.

3 Over the summer 2017, the College relocated to spacious new premises in Cranford, West London, from its previous location in central London. This transition provided the College with an opportunity to enhance substantially its facilities and subsequently the student experience. The move coincided with the appointment of a new College Principal.

4 The College's intention to introduce three-year degree programmes in September 2017 was delayed for a year due to the impending relocation. Consequently, the College is now offering six BSc/BA (Hons) programmes and two additional foundation degrees franchised by the University of Derby. It has continued to invest particularly in new equipment for the engineering programmes. Staffing has remained fairly constant, with 60 academic, technical and managerial staff (62 per cent full-time).

### 3 Findings from the monitoring visit

5 The College continues to make commendable progress in enhancing the quality of student provision, reflecting its own annual monitoring and enhancement plan (see paragraph 7). All actions arising from the Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) 2016 and the previous annual monitoring visit have been completed and a detailed and realistic annual action planning cycle established for development and enhancement. The academic appeals procedures for the Higher National programmes have been reviewed and are well established (see paragraph 6), and the assessment board for Higher National programmes has been fully aligned with the University of Derby assessment board while continuing to meet Pearson requirements (see paragraph 6). The terms of reference of the College's committees have been standardised and clarified (see paragraph 6). The student placement experience has been substantially enhanced, and the student voice continues to be successfully encouraged, heard and acted upon (see paragraph 10). Finally, a major improvement on the student experience has been made by the relocation and subsequent facilities upgrade (see paragraphs 11-12).

6 Following a review and substantial revision of their terms of reference, committees are consistently constructed with a defined membership and chaired by designated staff,

with clearly set out reporting and data review responsibilities. The College has a clear structure for annual monitoring and enhancement review which is updated annually. The revised terms of reference and governance structure ensure that the College monitors and reviews its programmes of study in a regular, detailed and effective way, which also encourages enhancement of provision. Individual programme reports go to the Quality and Standards Committee which is chaired by the Head of Quality and from there a combined report is referred to Academic Board chaired by the Principal. The Pearson Annual Monitoring Report 2016-17 is positive, and the College has incorporated the required monitoring and reporting processes of the University of Derby into its own review systems. A detailed and standardised academic appeals process is in place, which students are aware of, although no appeals have to date been submitted.

7 The College has a comprehensive Annual Monitoring and Enhancement Plan, which is reviewed and updated in an annual cycle. The Plan addresses teaching and learning and College staff undergo a formal teaching observation and a peer observation each year. The teaching observation feeds into the annual appraisal process, indicating any perceived areas of support and development. Together with the outcomes of the peer observation process, an individual staff action plan based on these observations is constructed. Student attendance monitoring is undertaken regularly by the programme teams, reviewed by the full-time student engagement officer and is correlated against progress and achievement. Assessments are revised each semester to ensure assignments are fit for purpose and students are encouraged to make links between theory and practice including real world scenarios. Resources are reviewed annually and take into account feedback from module evaluations and are further monitored through College's review processes. The College has achieved all the points set out in its annual monitoring and enhancement plan 2017, many of which reflecting ongoing development.

8 The College has continued to improve substantially the arrangements for students undertaking work experience placements on the Health and Social Care programmes by enhancing the role of the full-time Placement Coordinator. The Coordinator is responsible for the approval, coordination and support of students while undertaking the required work placements and works proactively with students and placement organisers. Students confirmed they were very well supported with regard to work placements and found the experience satisfying.

9 With regard to the admission of students the College continues to ensure that there are appropriate and effective policies and procedures in place. It operates a fair and open admissions process which is committed to equality of opportunity and non-discrimination and welcomes applications from all prospective students and provides appropriate services to students with learning support needs or disabilities. Since 2016, the College does not recruit international students on Tier 4 visas. The University of Derby approves all candidates recruited onto the top-up degrees. Selection criteria are published on the College website and in the prospectus. The induction programme and subsequent skills module provide students with opportunities to enhance the necessary academic and professional skills that they need to deploy as they progress through their courses and enables student transition into higher education. Students confirmed that the application process, which involves a face-to-face interview, was a supportive and informative experience. They also confirmed entrants were tested for English language skills and for any learning support needs. Students praised the induction programme as being particularly useful, supported by very enthusiastic staff.

10 The College has continued to make commendable progress in developing student representation and attendance at relevant committees, in addition to numerous informal processes, including participation in the National Student Survey. Student issues are discussed regularly at student council meetings, and actions taken are disseminated through

the student representatives, in addition to feedback provided in the well-established poster display throughout the building. The Student Voice Coordinator continues to interact with the student support office and course leaders, helping to resolve most issues before they become problematic. This Coordinator also plans and delivers training sessions for student representatives, which students noted had been informative.

11 Since the previous monitoring visit, the College has substantially enhanced teaching learning and support space and facilities provided for students. There is now a dedicated library equipped with laptops for student use if needed, a canteen, student common room, prayer room and lifts available to upper floors where recently equipped laboratories have been established to support engineering programmes. The College made every effort to make the impact of the move a positive experience for students, who confirmed that they were well informed in advance of the relocation and its implications over the summer of 2017.

12 Students confirmed that both academic and pastoral support at the College is excellent and that staff are approachable and extremely helpful. They consider that their voice is heard and acted upon and indicated that the biggest student issue was the former college premises which had been addressed with the move to new premises and resulting improvement in their teaching and learning experience.

13 The College's recruitment was slightly less than expected for 2017-18 due to it postponing the introduction of the franchised three-year BA/BSc degrees. There are two entry cohorts to Higher National programmes per year. For the 2015-16 cohorts, retention across all Higher National programmes averages 85 per cent. Most students following the HNC programmes transfer to HND, and many HND students opt to progress to the top-up degree programme. For the full-time top-up programme, completion is 88 per cent. Eighty four per cent of Higher National students achieve their target award, and 6 per cent the degree. These data are confirmed in the monitoring reports for the HND programmes, in the Continuing Monitoring of Academic Provision reports of the University of Derby and also in discussion with the College's Registrar.

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

14 The approval and monitoring procedures of the College's awarding body and organisation ensure that programme assessment aligns with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and that learning outcomes align with QAA Subject Benchmark Statements. The College has completed a submission for the Teaching Excellence Framework and has been given a provisional award, a final decision on the award expected in June 2018. The College supports and encourages staff to work within the framework of The Higher Education Academy (HEA). The Principal is a senior Fellow of the Academy and seven other staff that are now fellows or senior fellows.

15 The College now has accreditation of its degree programmes in business management from The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and for the degree programmes in Civil Engineering from the Joint Board of Moderators (JBM), which includes the Institution of Civil Engineers, Institution of Structural Engineers, the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation and the Institute of Highway Engineers. This enables graduates from top-up degree programmes and approved HND to meet the academic requirements for Incorporated Engineer (IEng) status.

## 5 Background to the monitoring visit

16 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.

17 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Jonathan Baker, Reviewer, and Dr Chris Amodio, Coordinator, on 18 April 2018.

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