



Anglo American Educational Services

Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight

Review by the Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

February 2012

About this report

This is a report of a review under the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Anglo American Educational Services. The review took place on 8 February 2012 and was conducted by a panel as follows:

- Dr A Thompson
- Professor R Harris
- Mrs R Ditchburn

The main purpose of the review was to:

- make judgements about the provider's delegated responsibilities for the management of academic standards and the quality and enhancement of learning opportunities
- draw a conclusion about whether the provider's public information is reliable
- report on any features of good practice
- make recommendations for action.

A summary of the key findings can be found in the section starting on page 3. The context in which these findings should be interpreted is explained on page 4. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 6.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.¹ More information about this review method can be found in the [published handbook](#).²

¹ www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/pages/default.aspx

² www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/eo-recognition-scheme.aspx

Key findings

The QAA panel considered evidence relating to the educational provision at Anglo American Educational Services (Anglo American), both information supplied in advance and evidence gathered during the visits of the review itself. The review has resulted in the key findings stated in this section.

Judgements

The QAA panel formed the following judgements about Anglo American Educational Services:

- **confidence** can reasonably be placed in the soundness of Anglo American Educational Services' management of academic standards
- **confidence** can reasonably be placed in the soundness of Anglo American Educational Services' management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities.

Conclusion about public information

The QAA panel concluded that:

- **reliance can** be placed on the public information that Anglo American Educational Services publishes about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The panel identified the following **features of good practice** at Anglo American Educational Services:

- the assessment feedback provided for students is of high quality, relevant and provided in a timely fashion (paragraph 1.2)
- the process of matching students to internship opportunities is undertaken in a painstaking and student-centred manner (paragraph 1.3)
- the academic British Life and Culture course effectively complements the internship process (paragraph 1.4)
- early stage interactions with students, particularly in respect of pre-departure advice and the quality of induction, are effective and supportive (paragraph 3.2).

Recommendations

The panel makes the following recommendations to Anglo American Educational Services. It is **advisable** that Anglo American Educational Services:

- develop a coordinated approach to the development of adjunct faculty, internship supervisors and administrative staff (paragraph 2.7).

It is **desirable** that Anglo American Educational Services:

- complete current plans to enhance online interactions with students (paragraph 2.6).

Context

Anglo American Educational Services (Anglo American), based in Bloomsbury, London, is a private provider of study abroad programmes for students from the United States undertaking part of their degree programme (to a maximum of one semester) in England. It has formal collaborative agreements with a number of accredited US universities (home universities) and provides:

- unpaid internships (in accordance with the restrictions imposed by the UK Border Agency)
- a short-term academic course (British Life and Culture)
- organisation and management of students' experience (including accommodation, providing teaching facilities, hiring adjunct faculty subject to home university approval, advice and information, study trips and hosting visiting faculty from home universities).

The annual student roll is normally 350-380, with a reasonable spread throughout the year but a slightly heavier concentration at the slightly attenuated summer school than during the autumn and spring semesters.

As a business-to-business operation Anglo American recruits only from home universities: its ultimate accountability is therefore to those universities, which, in accordance with their obligations to their own accrediting bodies, retain responsibility for all aspects of quality assurance, academic standards, publicity and student recruitment. It does, however, provide extensive information packs to students both prior and subsequent to their arrival in London (see paragraphs 3.1-3.2). In all cases it assures itself of the accredited status of home universities prior to signing agreements, periodically monitoring the continuation of this status by checking the websites of the regional accrediting bodies.

Anglo American had, at the time of the review visit: (i) recently concluded an affiliation agreement with Birkbeck, University of London, which will permit extended student enrolment on Birkbeck programmes; (ii) begun the process of appointing an accredited US institution as a school of record; and (iii) given preliminary consideration to extending its admissions procedures to include direct student recruitment. These latter two developments, however, remain provisional and will not be implemented prior to 2013-14. Anglo American is aware of its responsibility to inform relevant regulatory bodies about this or any other change of status.

Anglo American has instituted a non-executive Academic Committee, which includes home university members, to discuss academic matters. This Committee was found to be fit for purpose for the size and scale involved, and to contribute to formalising and enhancing Anglo American's strong and often longstanding links with home universities.

Anglo American's partnership agreements offer home universities a choice of three models of operation:

- the Full University Remit model, under which the home university develops the syllabus, sends one or more faculty members to London to teach it, and coordinates all aspects of assessment and evaluation: this model restricts Anglo American's responsibility to providing on-the-ground quality assurance
- the Combined Remit model, which involves the home university developing the syllabus and defining all course parameters: under this model Anglo American hires adjunct faculty (subject to home university approval) and coordinates all aspects of assessment and evaluation

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- the Full Anglo American Remit model: this requires Anglo American to develop the syllabus (either based on the relevant university's course description or as otherwise approved by the home university), hire adjunct faculty (visiting lecturers) (again subject to home university approval), and coordinate assessment and evaluation.

Anglo American was first accredited by the British Accreditation Council in June 2009. It has been subject to periodic inspections since, the most recent of which was undertaken in July 2010. The ensuing report made only formal recommendations (associated with notifying new premises) and described the provider as 'punctilious in its records in adhering to the balance of workplace internship and academic study. The cohort progression records for 2009 reveal no withdrawals or exclusions'.

Detailed findings

1 Academic standards

How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1 Anglo American has robust and mature processes for maintaining the academic standards of the academic programmes for which it has delegated responsibility. It effectively ensures through its organisational procedures that it discharges all regulatory, accreditation and administrative responsibilities in respect of programmes where responsibility for academic standards rests with home universities.

1.2 The timeliness and quality of the feedback on students' assessed work were explored in some detail, particularly given the time pressures unavoidably resulting from the compressed nature of the study abroad experience. The panel learned that feedback takes many forms, but that the predominant method is email. Students described the turnaround as extremely rapid, with the grade supported by comprehensive and helpful feedback designed to meet individual requirements: one student reported that, having asked for more detailed feedback, he was provided with comments 'almost as long as the essay itself'. The panel identified the quality, relevance and timeliness of the assessment feedback provided for students as a feature of good practice.

1.3 Anglo American has an extensive internship network, having links to some 600 employing bodies, mainly in the Greater London area. Students are assessed by essay, work log and presentation. The intern supervisor, an employee of the company or organisation concerned, reports both formatively and summatively, and this report contributes to the determination of the final grade. It was found that Anglo American goes to great lengths to match students with appropriate internships: in one case the panel learned that a student had rejected six seemingly appropriate offers until the perfect one was found. The painstaking and student-centred manner in which Anglo American matches students to internship opportunities is recognised and appreciated by both home universities and students and is identified as a feature of good practice.

1.4 In the Full Anglo American Remit model Anglo American, as provider, is responsible for designing the syllabus, normally in conjunction with the home university, and developing appropriate and effective assessment methods prior to submission to that university for approval and accreditation. The predominant course of this kind is British Life and Culture. This course is delivered to most intern students as an integral part of their study abroad experience. A multi-disciplinary course (the main disciplines being history and political science), British Life and Culture includes a wide range of presentational methods, including lecture-visits to museums and galleries. Assessment methods, which include marking the content and presentation of a student journal, are approved by home universities, to which the outcomes are passed for entry on the student record. The panel, having explored the development and delivery of this course with both faculty and students, identified the effectiveness with which the academic British Life and Culture course complements the internship process as a feature of good practice.

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

1.5 The relevant external reference points are those to which the home university is subject; though in respect of internships, Anglo American is aware of the Academic Infrastructure, and now systematically maps its practice against the expectations of the

Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (the Code of practice), Section 9: Work-based and placement learning. It also has the benefit of the advice and guidance of the (United States) National Association of Foreign Student Advisors, the Forum on Education Abroad and the National Society of Experiential Education.

1.6 In addition, adjunct faculty appointed by Anglo American are normally required to have experience of both the US and UK higher education systems; where necessary (for example in the case of those returning to teaching) appropriate induction is provided. It is confirmed that grading and grade conversion are well understood by those responsible, and that grade comparability between assessments conducted in the two countries is periodically monitored by home universities: the panel was told that significant disparities are seldom, if ever, found.

The panel has **confidence** in the provider's management of its delegated responsibilities for the standards of the awards to be conferred by the awarding institutions.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

How effectively does the provider fulfil its responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1 Anglo American is responsible for providing a diverse range of learning opportunities to students, both inside and outside the classroom. These include lectures, guest speakers, field and theatre trips, and visits to places of interest relevant to each cohort's focus and background. The panel learned that most classes are interactive, many are discussion-based (including the internship seminar, which is entirely so), and all faculty members (who are contracted to offer academic tutorials for 30 minutes before the start of each class) are experienced in teaching within the US educational system.

2.2 Students are supported by a well structured team for the academic, work-based and pastoral elements of their programme; failure and withdrawals are virtually unknown. Students were particularly complimentary about their induction and the positive contribution to it of the Student Liaison Officer, saying more generally that 'the whole experience exceeds expectations in many ways'.

2.3 Anglo American's self-assessment document, prepared and submitted for the purpose of the present review, was considered user-friendly, of high quality and robustly self-critical. It was established in the course of the visit that its enhancement-oriented approach accurately reflects the perceptions of Anglo American's culture, management, mechanisms and ethos held by both faculty and students.

How effectively are external reference points used in monitoring and evaluation processes?

2.4 See paragraph 1.5.

How effectively does the provider assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

2.5 Anglo American uses a range of mechanisms for assuring the quality of learning and teaching. The mechanisms by which it assures the quality of student learning include, in addition to the internship seminar (which enables students to discuss their progress, reflect on their experiences, and communicate any difficulties they are facing), formal student evaluations, teaching undertaken by both the Academic Director and visiting representatives of home universities (with informal and confidential feedback provided for quality control and enhancement purposes) and one-on-one discussions with senior staff which can be initiated by students at any reasonable time. The main routine communication channel with students is email: students told the panel that they find this is a comfortable and effective means of interaction, and that it is used by staff with efficiency and responsiveness. It is confirmed that Anglo American's methods of assuring the quality of learning are appropriate and effective.

How effectively does the provider assure itself that students are appropriately supported?

2.6 While Anglo American's face-to-face interactions with students were found to be of high quality, it is currently experimenting with, or giving consideration to introducing, a number of user-friendly ways of developing its electronic engagement with them. These methods include: (i) using social networks during internships, where a minority of students have experienced some isolation in the initial phase; (ii) developing a virtual learning environment; and (iii) as a broader strategy, enhancing its online presence for both educational and commercial ends. The panel concurs with Anglo American's view that there is scope for it to take a more systematic approach to this form of engagement, and in particular that it should give active consideration to introducing an intranet as an effective means of communication and engagement. It is desirable that Anglo American complete its current plans to enhance its online interactions with students.

How effective are the provider's arrangements for staff development in relation to maintaining and/or enhancing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.7 Anglo American acknowledges that current staff development arrangements leave room for development, and at the time of the review visit the Chief Executive Officer was undertaking a major organisational review with the aim, among others, of instituting a more strategic approach to continual improvement. It was reported that one outcome of this review is likely to be the introduction of a formal and properly funded system of professional development review which will embrace not only adjunct faculty but also administrative staff (whose support activities are central to the success of the enterprise) and internship supervisors. Such supervisors currently receive support and advice from the Internship Administration Coordinator on an individual basis only, with no opportunity for collective training or support. It is advisable that Anglo American develop a coordinated approach to the development of adjunct faculty, internship supervisors and administrative staff.

How effectively does the provider ensure that students have access to learning resources that are sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes of their programmes?

2.8 Learning resources are generally of a high standard and sufficient to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes of their programmes. The students who met the panel reported that the quality of available resources exceeded their expectations.

The panel has **confidence** that Anglo American Educational Services is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the learning opportunities it provides for students.

3 Public information

How effective are the provider's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing?

3.1 Anglo American's website offers a helpful explanation of the range and nature of available services. Nevertheless, responsibility for promoting and explaining information about the study abroad scheme to specific cohorts of students rests with home universities; this responsibility is not dependent solely on information provided by Anglo American, but is informed by personal contacts and two-way visits.

3.2 Website information and home university advice are supplemented by the informal contact and further intelligence (comprising programme-related instructions and advice on living in London) which Anglo American offers prospective applicants before they commit to the programme. Students described all published information from Anglo American (on its website, in hard copy and by personal email) as valuable, accurate and complete, noting in particular that its timeliness had enabled them to make meaningful decisions about programme options and domestic arrangements prior to departure. This information flow continued following their arrival in London, when both academic and internship expectations were reiterated and clarified. The effective and supportive nature of Anglo American's early stage interactions with students, with particular reference to pre-departure advice and the quality of induction, is identified as a feature of good practice.

The panel concludes that **reliance can be placed** on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

4 Action plan

| Anglo American Educational Services action plan relating to the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight February 2012 | | | | | | |
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| Good practice | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| The panel identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within the provider: | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the assessment feedback provided for students is of high quality, relevant and provided in a timely fashion (paragraph 1.2) | <p>Implementing online student evaluations to enable development of syllabi and course</p> <p>Standardised templates and forms for feedback to students and university partners, and to include synopsis from faculty</p> <p>Introduction of service level agreements (ie guaranteed response time)</p> | Sept 2012 | Academic Director Internship Manager | <p>Improved student and university satisfaction</p> <p>Increased percentage of meeting with students</p> <p>Meeting targeted service level agreements</p> <p>Positive final evaluations</p> | Academic Director Chief Executive Officer Partner Universities | <p>System evaluation three times per year (end of each term) by Academic Director, Chief Executive Officer and Internship Manager</p> <p>Annual review of systems with partner universities</p> <p>Student feedback</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the process of matching students to internship opportunities is undertaken in a painstaking and | Development of website to enhance student knowledge of potential employers and to enhance employer knowledge | Sept 2012 | Internship Manager | Maintain high percentage of first-round placement success rate | Academic Director Chief Executive Officer | System evaluation three times per year (end of each term) by Academic Director, Chief |

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| <p>student-centred manner (paragraph 1.3)</p> | <p>of potential student</p> <p>Enhanced student and supervisor questionnaires outlining individual objectives</p> <p>Site and student agreement on duties and responsibilities at outset</p> <p>Engage partner universities Career Centres for preparation of CVs and application materials</p> | | | <p>Maintain high level of student and employer satisfaction</p> | <p>Partner universities</p> | <p>Executive Officer and Internship Manager</p> <p>Annual review of systems with partner universities and employers</p> <p>Student feedback</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The academic British Life and Culture course effectively complements the internship process (paragraph 1.4) | <p>Introducing semester-length course options through the London semester of Birkbeck College, University of London</p> <p>Planning the introduction of a small nucleus of business and communications courses through an accredited US university</p> <p>Adjunct faculty will be</p> | <p>2012-13 academic year</p> <p>Summer 2013</p> <p>Sept 2012</p> | <p>Academic Director</p> | <p>Anticipated increased enrolment on course programme and internships</p> <p>Enhanced collaboration with Birkbeck, University of London and with US partner universities</p> <p>Improved</p> | <p>Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>Partner universities</p> | <p>Annual review of programming involving feedback of partner universities</p> <p>Approval of course options by Academic Committee</p> <p>Faculty feedback</p> <p>Student feedback</p> |

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| | briefed in detail about student interests and activities while in London Internship Seminar to be compulsory aspect of the academic programme | Sept 2012 | | feedback from adjunct faculty Enhanced engagement with student interns | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> early stage interactions with students, particularly in respect of pre-departure advice and the quality of induction, are effective and supportive (paragraph 3.2). | Involvement of new US representative in pre-departure orientation | Sept 2012 | Internship Manager | Increased student and university satisfaction | Academic Director | Student and university feedback (Student Liaison Officer surveys) | |
| | Standardised pre-entry and induction processes | Sept 2012 | Academic Programmes Manager | | Chief Executive Officer | Partner universities | Three times a year review of induction processes and procedures |
| | Introduce online webinars, online video link interviews and other forms of multimedia engagement | Jan 2013 | Student Liaison Officer | | | | |
| Advisable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation | |
| The panel considers that it is advisable for the provider to: | | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a coordinated approach to the development of adjunct faculty, internship | Standardised system of staff appraisal | | Chief Executive Officer Academic Director | Increased staff satisfaction and productivity | Chief Executive Officer Academic Director Partner Universities | Annual staff appraisals and satisfaction surveys Faculty | |

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| <p>supervisors and administrative staff (paragraph 2.7).</p> | <p>Increased interaction between adjunct faculty and academic administrative staff</p> <p>Introduction of training budget for faculty to attend conferences/ seminars/ etc in their respective fields</p> <p>Introduction of training budget for admin staff for workshops in: Career coaching Health and safety Management training Marketing Web development New software</p> <p>Enhanced interaction between adjunct faculty with visiting faculty directors from US partner universities in order to develop faculty skills and knowledge of US higher education systems and syllabus development</p> | | <p>Academic Director</p> <p>Chief Executive Officer Academic Director</p> <p>Chief Executive Officer Academic Director</p> <p>Academic Director</p> | <p>Enhanced knowledge of US higher education for adjunct faculty</p> <p>Strengthened partnerships between US and London-based faculty through direct communication</p> <p>Broadened skills set among admin staff, particularly in management and technology</p> <p>Enhanced internship experiences for students as result of increased engagement with site supervisors</p> <p>Increased knowledge of experiential</p> | | <p>performance reviews at end of every term</p> <p>Student surveys to measure staff performance and engagement</p> <p>Reporting systems for staff participation in conferences and workshops (ie debriefs, staff meetings, drafting best practice guidelines)</p> <p>Site visit evaluations for internship supervisors</p> |
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| | <p>Introduction of best practices guidebook for internship supervisors and enhanced interaction with Internship Manager</p> <p>Attendance of Internship Manager and Coordinator at conferences, including workshops and practicums on experiential learning</p> | | <p>Internship Manager</p> <p>Academic Director</p> <p>Internship Manager</p> | <p>learning and study abroad fields by Internship Manager and Coordinator</p> | | |
| Desirable | Action to be taken | Target date | Action by | Success indicators | Reported to | Evaluation |
| The panel considers that it is desirable for the provider to: | | | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete current plans to enhance online interactions with students (paragraph 2.6). | <p>Development of new interactive website</p> <p>Enhanced use of social media</p> <p>Introduce use of web forums, group online video link interviews and other methods of online interaction</p> | <p>Sept 2012</p> <p>Sept 2012</p> <p>Jan 2012</p> | <p>Internship Manager</p> <p>Academic Programmes Manager</p> <p>Student Liaison Officer</p> | <p>More consistent engagement with students throughout process</p> <p>Positive evaluations from students and partner universities</p> <p>Enhanced scope for creating</p> | <p>Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>Academic Director</p> <p>Partner Universities</p> | <p>Student surveys</p> <p>Annual meetings with partner universities</p> |

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| | | | | learning opportunities through student dialogue, peer-to-peer learning, and engagement with faculty and staff | | |
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Glossary

This glossary is a quick-reference guide to key terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers. For more details see the [handbook](#)³ for this review method.

If you require formal definitions of other terms please refer to the section on assuring standards and quality:

www.qaa.ac.uk/assuringstandardsandquality/pages/default.aspx.

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer **Glossary** on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus/glossary/pages/default.aspx.

academic standards The standards set and maintained by institutions for their courses and expected for their awards. See also **threshold academic standard**.

Code of practice *The Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education* published by QAA: a set of interrelated documents giving guidance for higher education institutions.

credit(s) A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education programmes of study, expressed as 'numbers of credits' at a specific level.

feature of good practice A positive aspect of the way a higher education institution manages quality and standards, which may be seen as exemplary to others.

learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned programmes of study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios) and staff development.

learning outcome What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

programme (of study) An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

public information Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

widening participation Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

³ www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/informationandguidance/pages/eo-recognition-scheme.aspx

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