

Annex 2: University of Brighton's International College

Introduction and background

The University of Brighton's International College (UBIC) was established in 2011. It is an embedded College within the KIC pathways framework, within a partnership with the University of Brighton. Students achieving the agreed grades proceed directly to a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the University. UBIC's first intakes of students were in 2011-12.

UBIC offers the following pathway programmes and awards:

Programme	Level
Diploma in Business	FHEQ 4
Foundation Certificate in Business, Hospitality, Tourism and Social Sciences	FHEQ 3
Foundation Certificate in Computing and Creative Technology	FHEQ 3
Foundation Certificate in Science and Engineering	FHEQ 3
Graduate Diploma in Business, Hospitality, Tourism and Social Sciences	FHEQ 6

Key findings

Note: As this College has only recently been established, and had not yet graduated students, the evidence base for the review was limited.

Academic standards

There can be **confidence** that academic standards at the University of Brighton's International College are managed appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of KIC and the University of Brighton.

Quality of learning opportunities

There can be **confidence** that the quality of learning opportunities at the University of Brighton's International College is assured and enhanced appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of KIC and the University of Brighton.

Public information

Reliance can be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that KIC is responsible for publishing about itself, its embedded colleges, and the programmes which they deliver.

Good practice

The review team noted the following features of good practice at this College:

- the potential of the mid-term reports on students as a learning development tool (paragraph 14)
- the positive arrangements for student access to the University of Brighton's learning facilities (paragraph 17).

Recommendations

The review team makes the following recommendations in relation to this College:

The team considers that it is **advisable** for UBIC to:

- ensure that there is provision in all programmes for external scrutiny of examination questions and summative assignments, before these are used in student assessment (paragraph 6).

The team considers that it would be **desirable** for UBIC to:

- encourage the greater engagement of academic staff both with the relevant department of the partner university and, more generally, with staff development opportunities at the University of Brighton (paragraph 16).

Detailed findings

How effectively do KIC and UBIC fulfil responsibilities for the management of academic standards at this college?

1 KIC has only recently established UBIC as an embedded college at the University of Brighton, with the first students admitted in September 2011. The written agreement between the partners was found to be fit for purpose. Processes exist for the reviewing and updating of articulation lists. There are plans to extend the range of articulations into other subject areas offered at the University, to add to the opportunities for KIC students.

2 UBIC operates within KIC's quality assurance framework and at local level the Joint Academic Board (JAB) has been established, comprising both College and University representatives, and this meets regularly to monitor the partnership as required under the framework. Programme committees are also being established.

How effective is the management of student assessment?

3 The first interim assessment boards had been held at the time of the review visit. The setting and marking of assessment for the English language provision at the College is well supported by KIC's Centre for Learning Innovation and Quality (CLIQ). Other subjects draw heavily on the input and experience of other KIC colleges for setting assessments, while marking and moderation are undertaken internally. Procedures in this area are still in the process of being embedded.

4 Certificates are not issued by KIC centrally. No transcripts had yet been issued by UBIC.

Where appropriate, how effectively are UK external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

5 With all current UBIC programmes founded on existing KIC provision, programme content takes due account of UK external reference points. Comprehensive programme specifications include clear references to appropriate national subject benchmark statements.

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

6 The UBIC's first (two) external examiners had recently been approved and therefore their input had so far been minimal. However, one external examiner had already been appropriately consulted in relation to the moderation of the marking of a module. It was not clear to what extent external examiners would be involved in moderating assessment instruments before they were taken by students.

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

7 Given the early stage of its existence, UBIC's bank of statistical data is limited. However, data and associated comment concerning student recruitment and progression were contained in the College Director's first mid-year report to the JAB. The University has also committed itself to providing statistical reports on the progress of UBIC alumni once they had started progressing to degree studies at Brighton.

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

8 Learning opportunities are supported by UBIC's policies and procedures, with service level agreements allowing students access to a range of university-based facilities, including libraries, laboratories, teaching spaces and student support services.

9 Use is made of KIC's virtual learning environment, primarily as a repository for academic and administrative information for students.

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

10 In line with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, programme specifications contain clear reference to the external reference points, such as subject benchmark statements, used in the development of course content.

How do KIC and UBIC assure themselves that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

11 UBIC follows the KIC framework for appropriate processes in support of the recruitment, induction and appraisal of staff. Similarly, processes are in place for the collection of feedback from students on their learning experience, which, in turn, will inform annual programme reports. UBIC has benefited from the strong network of KIC colleges, their experience of delivering the programmes, and from the support provided by CLIQ.

12 A learning, teaching and assessment strategy in response to KIC's overarching strategy has not yet been developed by UBIC.

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

13 In accordance with KIC's expectations, clear systems have been established at UBIC for gathering student feedback, particularly through an effective system of student representatives. Students are made aware of UBIC's response to feedback and associated action.

How do KIC and UBIC assure themselves that students are supported effectively?

14 Students are supported effectively through one-to-one tutorials, with additional support available through UBIC's Student Services. The introduction of mid-term reports on student progress have real potential as a learning development tool. Student and academic handbooks are helpful and available electronically on the virtual learning environment. UBIC is addressing initial problems associated with its student home-stay accommodation scheme.

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

15 The recruitment and admission of students is managed centrally by KIC. UBIC and the University of Brighton are working together closely in identifying new recruitment markets.

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

16 All staff have undergone induction to UBIC and to the central KIC organisation and its procedures. However, at this initial stage, there appears to be no systematic structure to academic staff training. Such staff, both full-time and sessional, need to be encouraged to take up staff development opportunities at the partner University, especially once the staff appraisal scheme is embedded. Staff contacts with relevant University departments could also be more evident. In contrast, support staff development is carefully managed by KIC.

How effectively do KIC and UBIC ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?

17 KIC's expectations for its students are met through a comprehensive set of service level agreements with the University allowing student access to a wide range of academic and other facilities. There is also good provision within UBIC's own accommodation of classroom space and IT facilities.

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

18 Provision of public information is managed centrally by KIC. The information is clearly presented and the website considered by student users to be easily navigable.

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

19 The quality and accuracy of information is checked and monitored by well established central KIC communication systems. Within the devolved framework introduced by KIC, information published at the level of UBIC is appropriate and effective for student needs.

RG 958b 07/12

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester
GL1 1UB

Tel 01452 557000
Fax 01452 557070
Email comms@qaa.ac.uk
Web www.qaa.ac.uk

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2012

ISBN 978 1 84979 609 5

All QAA's publications are available on our website www.qaa.ac.uk.

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786