



Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd

Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

May 2012

Annex 7: University of Lincoln International Study Centre

Introduction and background

The University of Lincoln International Study Centre (ISC) was established in 2010. It delivers a number of foundation diploma programmes and a pre-master's programme, all of which are approved by the University, and Year 1 of an Integrated Engineering programme which is validated by the University. It also offers an English Language Preparation Programme. Students who successfully complete their programmes and achieve the required grades will progress to an undergraduate or master's-level programme at the University.

The ultimate responsibility for academic standards rests with the University. Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, through the ISC, is responsible for the day-to-day management of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. The University is responsible for public information.

Key findings

Academic standards

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that there can be **limited confidence** that academic standards at the University of Lincoln International Study Centre are managed appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (and of the University where appropriate).

Quality of learning opportunities

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that there can be **confidence** that the quality of learning opportunities at the University of Lincoln International Study Centre is assured and enhanced appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (and of the University where appropriate).

Public information

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that the University of Lincoln is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Recommendations

The review team makes the following recommendation in relation to this college.

The review team considers that it is **essential** for the University of Lincoln ISC to:

- ensure that the agreed policies, regulations and procedures for the management of academic standards are fully implemented (paragraphs 1-3 and 5).

The review team considers that it is **advisable** for the University of Lincoln ISC to:

- ensure that the Centre Handbook is accurate and consistently implemented (paragraph 16)
- ensure the consistent accuracy of student handbooks (paragraph 16)
- ensure the accuracy of information provided for inclusion in published information (paragraph 18).

Detailed findings

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and University of Lincoln ISC fulfil responsibilities for the management of academic standards at this college?

1 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd has not fully discharged its responsibilities for the management of academic standards at this ISC, in accordance with the framework established in the contract with the University. There was evidence that in the first year of operation of the ISC Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd had failed to ensure that all the requirements of the agreed policies, regulations and the procedures for the management of academic standards had been followed. This included the appointment of an inappropriately qualified external examiner, the absence of any system for moderating examination papers, and compliance with contractual requirements concerning operation of examination boards. Although Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd has committed itself to addressing these issues, and there is evidence of significant improvement during the current year, the review team still has concerns that some issues have not yet been fully resolved: see paragraphs 2-3 and 5.

How effective is the management of student assessment?

2 While the review found some evidence that Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd manages the assessment of students at this ISC effectively, in line with the requirements agreed with the University, some significant shortcomings were identified. According to the inter-institutional agreement with the University, programme assessment boards (PABs) should be chaired by one of the University's link tutors, who should report to an appropriate committee of the University as specified in the Centre Handbook. However, the reviewers found that the PAB had been chaired by the Head of Centre, and the link tutors, and indeed the University, were unaware of their responsibilities in this area.

3 The treatment of late coursework submissions was found to be variable, and ISC staff acknowledged that they were not uniformly applying the agreed policy on late coursework as set out in the course handbook. It is essential that Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd ensures that the agreed policies, regulations and procedures for the assessment of students are fully implemented.

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

4 UK external reference points are used effectively in the management of academic standards. See main report, paragraphs 1.22 - 1.26.

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

5 The review team found that Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd intends to use external examiners to assure academic standards at the ISC, through the application of the University's requirements. During the academic year 2010-11, the first year of this ISC's operation, an inappropriately qualified person was appointed external examiner by the ISC, in contravention of the terms of the contract with the University. At the time of the review visit, the University had agreed the appointment of an appropriate external examiner (subject to confirmation). However, because this person had not begun to carry out their examining duties, no evidence was yet available to demonstrate their involvement in the assessment process and examination boards, nor the consideration of their reports. It is essential that Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd ensures that the agreed policies, regulations and procedures for external examining are fully implemented.

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

6 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd makes effective use of statistical information to monitor and assure academic standards. See main report, paragraphs 1.34 - 1.39.

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

7 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd fulfils its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities at this ISC effectively. See main report, paragraphs 2.1 - 2.4.

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

8 Appropriate sections of the *Code of practice* are used effectively in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities. See main report, paragraphs 2.5 - 2.6.

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and University of Lincoln ISC assure themselves that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

9 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd assures itself effectively that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained at this ISC. See main report, paragraphs 2.7 - 2.11.

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

10 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's expectations with regard to student feedback are met through the effective use of questionnaires and students' elected representatives. See main report, paragraphs 2.12 - 2.16.

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and University of Lincoln ISC assure themselves that students are supported effectively?

11 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd fulfils its obligations for the support of students at the ISC effectively. See main report, paragraphs 2.17 - 2.21.

How effectively does University of Lincoln ISC manage the recruitment and admission of students?

12 Recruitment and admission of students to the ISC are managed centrally by Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, and these processes are generally effective. See main report, paragraphs 2.22 - 2.26.

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

13 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's arrangements for staff development are applied effectively at this ISC. See main report, paragraphs 2.27 - 2.32.

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and University of Lincoln ISC ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?

14 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, through its agreement with the University, manages the provision of learning resources effectively. See main report, paragraphs 2.33 - 2.37.

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

15 Students report that broadly they receive sufficient and accurate information from the ISC. See main report, paragraphs 3.1 - 3.3. Students generally found that they had sufficient and accurate information prior to admission. However, some reported that agents had given misleading information about progression to other higher education institutions after the completion of their course at this ISC: they were led to believe that Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd would support them in this, but they found after their arrival that it was not the policy to do so.

16 The students found their handbook comprehensive and user-friendly. However, this handbook contains two conflicting versions of the penalty for late submission of coursework, and there was also some confusion among staff about this policy. The review team considers it advisable that Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd ensures the consistent accuracy of centre and student handbooks.

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

17 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing at this ISC (see main report, paragraphs 3.4 - 3.7) have not proved consistently effective. The reviewers found a hard-copy publicity brochure in which the stated requirements for progression from the ISC to the University were incorrect for all International Year One courses except for Engineering. Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd withdrew this publication immediately when the errors were pointed out.

18 The inter-institutional agreement specifies that the University has final responsibility for publicity materials, and this was confirmed by representatives of the University during the review visit. However, information for these materials is supplied by Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd. The review team, therefore, considers it advisable that Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd ensures the accuracy of information provided for inclusion in publicity materials.

Action plan

University of Lincoln International Study Centre action plan relating to the Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight May 2012						
Essential	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The team considers that it is essential for the provider to:						
9 • ensure that the agreed policies, regulations and procedures for the management of academic standards are fully implemented (paragraphs 1-3 and 5).	Review the policies, regulations and procedures for the ISC; hold meetings with the Head of Centre, Regional Director and Deputy Principal to ensure these are robust	August 2012	Head of Centre Regional Director	The production, and publication in handbooks, of a set of policies, regulations and procedures for the ISC that have been agreed by the University	Deputy Principal ISCQAEC	Annual review of policies, regulations and procedures
	Gain agreement for these policies, regulations and procedures with the University of Lincoln Academic Registrar and Quality Assurance Department		Head of Centre Regional Director		University of Lincoln Academic Registrar	
	Communicate agreed policies, regulations and procedures to ISC staff and students through staff and student handbooks, and meetings between Head of Centre, staff and students (see	September 2012	Head of Centre	Meetings between the Head of Centre, staff and students Staff and students receive copies of handbooks	Deputy Principal ISCQAEC	Personal tutorials with students Student feedback questionnaires Staff meetings

	also Advisable actions, below)			Staff and students are conversant with the policies, regulations and procedures and know where to access them (See also advisable actions)		
	Ensure that second marking and moderation follow the prescribed policy in Centre Handbook and Staff Handbook	August 2012 and ongoing	Head of Centre	Staff implement marking and moderation requirements Evidence recorded in module boxes External examiners comment on second marking and moderation at programme assessment boards and in reports		Module boxes External examiners' reports Annual monitoring report
	Ensure that link tutors chair programme assessment boards	August 2012 and ongoing	Head of Centre Exams Officer link tutors	Link tutors briefed about this role and carry it out effectively		Programme assessment boards minutes Annual monitoring report
	Ensure that rules on late coursework are defined, published and	August 2012	Head of Centre	Rules on late coursework defined and included in		

	implemented			handbooks			
	Ensure that appropriately experienced external examiners are nominated and appointed	Ongoing	Head of Centre University of Lincoln committee which approves external examiners	Students and staff understand and comply with the rules External examiners with appropriate expertise and qualifications are nominated, appointed, and undertake roles as defined in Centre Handbook		Student feedback questionnaires Staff meetings with Head of Centre Minutes of University of Lincoln committee which approves external examiners Annual monitoring report	
	Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	
∞	The team considers that it is advisable for the provider to:						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that the Centre Handbook is accurate and consistently implemented (paragraph 16) 	Agreed policies, regulations and procedures (see above) published in the Centre Handbook; staff informed in Staff Handbook, which is implemented consistently	September 2012 and ongoing	Head of Centre	Production and distribution of a Centre Handbook containing agreed policies, regulations and procedures At staff meetings Head of Centre will brief staff, give guidance, and monitor implementation of the Centre Handbook	University of Lincoln Quality Assurance Department Regional Director ISCQAEC	Annual review of policies, regulations and procedures (See also evaluation of essential actions, above)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure the consistent accuracy of student handbooks (paragraph 16) 	<p>Agreed policies, regulations and procedures (see above) incorporated in student handbooks</p>	<p>September 2012 and ongoing</p>	<p>Head of Centre</p>	<p>Consistently accurate student handbooks signed off and distributed to students</p>	<p>Regional Director ISCQAEC</p>	<p>Personal tutorials with students Student feedback questionnaires Staff meetings</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure the accuracy of information provided for inclusion in published information (paragraph 18). 	<p>Review for accuracy all current information for inclusion in publicity materials, including that provided electronically, and put in place a checking process for the future</p>	<p>September 2012 and ongoing</p>	<p>Head of Centre International Marketing Manager University of Lincoln Marketing Department</p>	<p>All published information is accurate and is signed off by the University</p>	<p>ISCQAEC University of Lincoln Head of Marketing</p>	<p>The University's approval and sign-off of the information included in any publicity material Quarterly review and evaluation of the product sheets, which informs the publicity material Yearly review and evaluation of information in the brochure and website</p>

Key to Action Plan:

ISCQAEC: International Study Centres Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

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