



Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology

Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight

Review by the Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education

September 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 Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology. The review took place on 12 September 2012 and was conducted by a panel, as follows:

- Professor Alan Jago
- Professor Debbie Lockton
- Dr David Gale.

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 5.

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 Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology (LACT), 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 Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology:

- **confidence** can be placed in Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology's management of its responsibilities for academic standards
- **confidence** can be placed in Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities.

Conclusion about public information

The QAA panel concluded that:

- **reliance** can be placed on the public information that the Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology supplies about itself.

Good practice

The QAA panel identified the following **features of good practice** at Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology:

- the strong relationship between the London campus, students and internship providers, and the preparation and support that students receive undertaking the internship programme (paragraph 2.2).

Recommendations

The QAA panel makes the following recommendations to Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology.

The panel considers that it is **advisable** for the provider to:

- ensure that information published about the London campus in the UK is both current and reliable (paragraph 3.2).

The panel considers that it would be **desirable** for the provider to:

- establish systems for the identification of students with learning needs and the appropriate support mechanisms needed for such students (paragraph 2.10).

Context

The Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (LUCT) is a private university with 10 campuses around the world. It was established in Malaysia in 1991, receiving its recognition as a full university in 2007. The London campus was opened in 2007, and is located in Piccadilly, central London. In the UK the registered company name of the London campus is the Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology Ltd (LACT) which is the name used for the purposes of this report.

LACT delivers 12 undergraduate courses, and a MBA programme. In 2011-12, there were 139 full-time students enrolled on these programmes.

The University's degree and postgraduate courses are accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). All the courses offered in London are part of LUCT's programmes offered in Malaysia, which are accredited by MQA and, as such, are recognised by the MQA. Since 2008, LACT has been accredited by the Accreditation Service for International Colleges (ASIC).

At the time of the scrutiny visit, LACT had collaborative arrangements with two UK higher education providers to offer two degrees. There was an arrangement with Anglia Ruskin University for undergraduate programmes, which allowed students completing years one and two of an LUCT degree to transfer to one of two Anglia Ruskin University programmes for their final year at LACT. Under this arrangement students gain two degrees. The other arrangement is with the University of Gloucestershire for MBA students. Students completing the MBA programme at LACT can transfer to the University of Gloucestershire to complete a second MBA award, which focuses on research methodology and a research dissertation. With this arrangement, students register and transfer to the University of Gloucestershire.

In addition to offering full degree programmes, where students typically spend one or two years in London, LACT provides a particular focus for the provision of LUCT's study abroad programme, known as the Global Classroom. This takes two forms: a semester transfer, whereby students from other LUCT campuses can register for one semester to take their module at the London campus; and a month transfer, whereby students from the campus in Kuala Lumpur study in London for one month and gain credit towards their award. Recently, a small number of Finnish students have joined the Global Classroom on a semester transfer. While LUCT has not entered into formal agreements, the sending institution has mapped LUCT credits against ECT credits so that credits from the semester contributed to their award.

LACT is an international branch campus of LUCT and, as such, there are very clear and strong controls from Malaysia on campus operations, including strategic direction, financial control and marketing. LACT is seen as an integrated part of the University and its development forms part of the overall strategic plan for LUCT. Senior staff at LACT were very clear to the scrutiny panel on their responsibilities and how the ultimate responsibility for academic standards rests with the central University. The head of LACT is a University Pro Vice-Chancellor of the central University and has vice-presidential rank within LUCT and, as such, is a member of the University's executive management team. Part of the role of the London-based Pro Vice-Chancellor is to introduce a uniform quality assurance processes for LUCT as a whole.

Detailed findings

1 Academic standards

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

1.1 Responsibility for establishing the framework for academic standards rests with the central University. As a consequence, LACT is subject to all of the central quality assurance arrangements.

1.2 LUCT has an integrated governance and management structure to oversee academic standards. Academic standards and the arrangements for curriculum management and delivery have been set and approved by the University Senate. These are codified in the University's Quality Manual. The University Senate is responsible for overseeing all LUCT's academic work at all its campuses. It is the Senate which formally confers all degrees and diplomas on the recommendation of a Board of Examiners. The Senate has three subcommittees, namely the Quality Assurance Board, the University Learning and Teaching Committee and the Curriculum Development Board, which develop, implement, monitor and review the University's quality assurance and enhancement policies. These policies are implemented across all the campuses.

1.3 Within LACT, responsibility for academic standards rests with the Pro Vice-Chancellor based in London. On a day-to-day basis the responsibility is operated by the Academic Coordinator and the Academic Operations Manager. Both report to the Pro Vice-Chancellor.

1.4 To enable quality control procedures to be applied in London, there are three mechanisms in place. Firstly, there are weekly academic team meetings, which mainly deal with student issues and operational matters. The meetings are organised to enable all staff to attend; this is important, given that most staff are part-time. Secondly, there are Board of Studies meetings; these are seen as the equivalent of a course committee. There are two boards, one for undergraduate programmes and one for postgraduate programmes. Each meets once per semester. The role of the Board of Studies is clearly defined and meets to discuss the progress of all programmes. It has a particular role in relation to student progress. Thirdly, there are campus boards of examiners held at the end of each semester to consider and review the results of all students enrolled on all the courses at the campus. There are two such boards, one for undergraduate programmes and one for postgraduate programmes. The result details, alongside a sample of examination scripts and coursework assignments, are sent to LUCT centrally for consideration before final approval by the University Senate.

1.5 Assessment is carried out in line with the practice of the central University. There are clear marking and grading criteria set out in each course outline, which are included within the Student Handbook and in the course outlines. All assessed work is returned with feedback on achievement and ways of improving. This is normally achieved within two weeks. Methods of assessment are designed to be appropriate to the defined learning outcomes. All examination papers are now double marked before consideration by the Board of Examiners. It was acknowledged in the institution's self-evaluation document that LACT did not have a completely definitive procedure for dealing with late work, although the Boards of Examiners were involved in the final decision on such issues.

1.6 LUCT has recently revised its Quality Control Framework, and three elements of that revision have been introduced very recently at the London campus. These include end-of-module reports, an annual course evaluation, and the introduction of a set of guidelines

for successful delivery of lectures. End-of-module reports are completed by the relevant lecturer and considered by both the Academic Coordinator and the Pro Vice-Chancellor. The annual course evaluation is written to a prescribed format and is a self-critical review of how the delivery of the course has been during the previous semester. It is considered by the University's Quality Committee. The scrutiny panel saw evidence of the introduction of these new elements.

1.7 LACT undertakes student course evaluations. Students that the scrutiny panel met were clear about what happened to these evaluations. Both students and staff were made aware of the outcomes of the process.

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

1.8 Currently, LACT's key reference points have been the requirements of LUCT. In addition, most of the staff teaching on the programmes have experience of other higher education institutions within the UK and bring that experience to their role. The self-evaluation identifies another key input from external sources as being the involvement with various employers in the UK, who take the internship students from the University.

How effectively does the provider use external scrutiny of assessment processes to assure academic standards?

1.9 The LACT boards of examiners act as internal examination board, which meet at the end of each semester. Students are informed of their grades once this meeting has taken place. All grades are regarded as provisional until they are ratified by Senate. LUCT does not have an external examiner system. The self-evaluation stated that the moderation of student work undertaken by the central campus acts as a form of external scrutiny of the assessment processes.

1.10 LACT is clearly aware of its role in managing its responsibilities with respect to academic standards and acknowledges that its key reference points are the policies and procedures of the main University.

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

2 Quality of learning opportunities

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

2.1 LUCT has a strong commitment to industry involvement in its activities and, related to this, students learning outside the University. Industry involvement includes input into curriculum design and delivery, for example through guest lecturers from industry. The scrutiny panel learnt that assessment was often based on practical industry scenarios. The students met by the panel confirmed that experiential learning and practical experience was part of their courses, and that the industrial visits they undertook enhanced their learning.

2.2 Students have the opportunity to undertake internships. At the time of the visit, two of the four faculties offered this opportunity. There are plans to introduce this for all degree programmes. Internships will take place in London for study abroad students where

the year of study requiring the internship coincides with the student's study in London. Internships are used to encourage students to experience the whole job application and selection process, including writing job applications and CVs, and interviews. Students met by the panel confirmed the importance placed on internships. They also confirmed that outcomes from such are clearly defined and weekly evaluations by the employer are discussed between the lecturer and the student. Students are required to evaluate their internship once it has been completed. The scrutiny panel felt that the strong relationship between LACT, students and the internship providers, and the preparation and support that the students receive undertaking the internship programme, are considered to be a feature of good practice.

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

2.3 As for the external reference points used in the management of academic standards, LACT's key reference points are the requirements of LUCT. In addition, LUCT sees a key source of external input as the employers who take students from LUCT for internships.

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

2.4 There is a formal appointments procedure for the appointment of staff and all appointments are approved by the central University in Malaysia. All new staff are effectively inducted. The University has Guidelines for Successful Delivery, that is guidelines for lecture delivery, that were introduced in the latter part of 2011-12 and discussed by staff at LACT at a staff development event.

2.5 In addition to the Guidelines for Successful Delivery, there are two other elements to the Quality Control Framework: an end-of-module report introduced in 2011-12, and an Annual Course Evaluation. Both report forms require comment on a number of areas, including resources and student feedback, which are forwarded to the main University Quality Committee in Malaysia.

2.6 Student feedback on teaching quality is gained by student appraisal forms, which are analysed and sent to the appropriate faculty head. These are discussed with individual staff, if there are specific issues. Students also provide feedback on internships they complete. Student feedback is considered by the Board of Studies and at weekly academic meetings.

2.7 A formal system of peer observation was introduced in 2011 and will as such highlight any staff development needs. Although there is no formal system of staff appraisal, the panel gained the impression that a lot of informal appraisal was being conducted.

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

2.8 There is an effective induction programme in place, which students found helpful. Each student has an academic supervisor, although often informal contacts with staff are seen as equally important to students. There is a strong relationship between LACT, students and internship providers in the preparation and support for students undertaking internships.

2.9 There are a number of mechanisms to support students. All academic staff are accessible and students reported that they have good contact with staff. The Academic

Coordinator and Academic Operations Manager provide general support and assistance, which is appreciated by the students the panel met. Staff can refer students to support systems both within LACT and outside. For matters of pastoral support there is a Student Support Advisor.

2.10 Board of Studies and weekly academic meetings discuss individual students who may be having problems and action to be taken in respect of such students. While the students said that there was English language support for those who needed it, they were less clear of any other support available. It was also unclear among support staff that the panel met whether there was a mechanism for identifying learning support needs in a systematic way. As a consequence, the scrutiny panel felt that it was desirable for LACT to establish systems for the identification of students with learning needs and the appropriate support needed for such students.

2.11 Some students are student ambassadors. These ambassadors, who are chosen by staff to represent LACT at events, also convey student views to senior management. While there is no formal representation system for students, it was clear to the scrutiny panel that students felt satisfied that they could make their views known.

2.12 Overall, students were positive about the way in which their concerns were addressed, the level of interaction with staff and the responsiveness of staff to issues that they raised.

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

2.13 LUCT has an established policy in respect of learning, teaching and development of its staff. Each member of staff is expected to assume responsibility for their own personal development and for keeping a record of their staff development activities.

2.14 There is support for staff to attend conferences and there are regular internal staff development sessions for all staff, which they are required to attend, including updates from senior LUCT staff visiting from Malaysia. These are scheduled to take account of the fact that most staff are part-time. Staff feel that their needs in relation to staff development are well catered for.

2.15 While there was no formal staff appraisal, feedback on teaching quality is obtained through student appraisal forms. LACT is developing a system of peer observation, although this already happens on an informal basis.

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?

2.16 Students' views about resources are obtained through a number of sources, including module and annual course evaluations, and meetings between staff and individual students and groups of students. Students are satisfied that they could raise issues with regard to resources.

2.17 The self-evaluation gave details of the library facilities available to students within London. There was a heavy emphasis on electronic resources. There are appropriate computing facilities available. Students that the scrutiny panel met were complimentary about most of the facilities available to them, although they were critical of the library resources in terms of opening times and availability of books. The scrutiny panel noted that LACT was taking steps to address this issue by entering into an agreement to access further library resources.

The panel has **confidence** that the provider 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 The self-evaluation stated that the information issued by LACT covers both generic and programme specific issues. LUCT uses a variety of media to provide accurate information to students in the recruitment and acceptance stages of the process. This includes the main LUCT website and printed promotional materials. The students that the scrutiny panel met were complimentary about the admissions process, which was both thorough and prompt. They also confirmed that the information provided in advance of application was accurate and comprehensive.

3.2 Any public information for publication either in printed form or on the web, prepared by LACT, has to be sent to LUCT's Centre for Content Creation team in Cyberjaya, Malaysia, for approval and publication. The London team checks the accuracy of the information before it is sent. From the evidence provided by LACT, some of the information about LUCT's operations and activities in the UK is published on the website by the central campus Content Creation team without the involvement of LACT. The scrutiny panel found evidence that some of this information is out-of-date and, as a consequence, inaccurate. As a result, the scrutiny panel considered it advisable that the University ensures that information published about the London campus in the UK is both current and reliable.

3.3 Students also receive a detailed programme handbook. The review panel found these to be very detailed and clear. All the material for the student handbook is prepared by staff in London and is updated each semester. The content has to be approved by senior management in the central University, Malaysia, although there is discretion as to content, much of which is London-specific. The handbooks are supplemented by additional information about the individual courses. The students told the panel that the information provided was useful and comprehensive.

3.4 Communication between staff and students is undertaken in a number of ways, which was positively commented on by the students. LUCT is developing a student portal for its London campus. Many students who had taken part of their courses in Malaysia and had used this facility there spoke positively about it and said that it would be helpful to have it available in London also.

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

4 Action plan

Limkokwing Academy of Creative Technology action plan relating to the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight September 2012						
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 strong relationship between the London campus, students and internship providers, and the preparation and support that students receive undertaking the internship programme (paragraph 2.2). 	<p>To better ensure that this area of good practice is sustained, two new initiatives are being taken:</p> <p>First, a Forum comprising campus senior managers, representatives of internship providers and students is being formed to strengthen and develop the nature and range of internship opportunities that are available and this Forum will meet once a semester</p>	<p>February 2013 for inaugural meeting</p> <p>End of March 2013 for inaugural Internship Induction Programme prior to the mid April internships</p>	<p>Academic Coordinator</p> <p>Campus Manager and Academic Coordinator</p>	<p>Establishment of the Forum attracting support from internship providers and their regular attendance and participation</p> <p>Compilation of the Student Internship Induction Programme</p> <p>Student feedback and participation</p>	<p>Campus Manager and Pro Vice-Chancellor</p> <p>Pro Vice-Chancellor</p>	<p>Assessed by reference to the enhancement and expansion of internship opportunities for students</p> <p>Student reaction and feedback as to whether the programme better prepared them to harness the internship opportunity</p>

	<p>Second, a formal Student Internship Induction Programme is being introduced to better prepare students for the internship experience</p> <p>This will be a one day programme which will usually take place two weeks prior to the commencement of an internship</p>					
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"> ensure that information published about the London campus in the UK is both current and reliable (paragraph 3.2). 	<p>During the course of the review, when outdated information on the website was highlighted, immediate action was taken to remove it the same day</p> <p>Since receipt of the draft report, the London campus website material has been reviewed and, where necessary, amended</p>	<p>12 September 2012</p> <p>26 November 2012</p>	<p>Senior Vice President</p> <p>Pro Vice-Chancellor and Campus Manager</p>			

	Any new information prior to uploading will follow a new approval process which will involve a double check of first approval from the Campus Manager and final approval from the Pro Vice-Chancellor prior to sending the material to Kuala Lumpur with documented sign-off	1 December 2012	Campus Manager and Pro Vice-Chancellor	Accurate and up-to-date data relating to London Campus will always be on the central University website	Head of Content Creation Centre at the University and Senior Vice President	Feedback and queries and so on from students and other stakeholders as to published London campus information
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"> establish systems for the identification of students with learning needs and the appropriate support mechanisms needed for such students (paragraph 2.10). 	<p>Introduction of a Learner's Assessment form inviting students to indicate any perceived learning needs</p> <p>The forms will then be assessed by the Academic Coordinator in consultation with the student will arrange realistic support</p>	<p>Introduction of the Learner's Assessment form by 11 January 2013 with the new arrangements being fully implemented for the start of the next semester 4 March 2013</p>	Academic Coordinator and Campus Manager	<p>Students' feedback</p> <p>Take-up rate following introduction of the form</p> <p>Academic improvement of relevant students</p>	Pro Vice-Chancellor	<p>Assessed by reference to progress of supported students on a semester by semester basis</p> <p>Discussion of the scheme as a standing agenda item at Board of Examiners</p>

						and commented upon in minutes of the same
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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

RG 1090 01/13

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© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2013

ISBN 978 1 84979 71 9

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

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786