

SEN15D022

Title: Proposed New Institutional Partnership – Brooksby Melton College
Authors: Mr Gavin Tash, Partnerships Office
Circulation: Senate – 13 January 2016
Agenda: SEN15A002
Version: Final
Status: Open

A proposed new institutional partnership to validate degrees at Brooksby Melton College (BMC).

Senate is asked to:

endorse the recommendation made by the Learning and Teaching Committee at its meeting on 21 October (minute 14) that the Brooksby Melton College be approved as a partner institution of the University for a period of up to five years commencing September 2016.

Resource Implications

Cost and time involved in supporting the approval process. Ongoing costs (mainly fixed costs: staff time) in managing and monitoring the partnership and supporting academic and support staff at BMC.

Risk Implications

Risks identified as part of the Institutional Approval process.

Equality and Diversity

There are no equality and diversity implications.

Further Information

Mr Gavin Tash
Senior Partnerships Manager, LTS
01603 592672
g.tash@uea.ac.uk

Attachments

Appendix 1 – Brooksby Melton College Institutional Approval Report

University of East Anglia

Report of the Institutional Approval of Brooksby Melton College 30 September 2015

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 An institutional review Panel met at the Melton campus of Brooksby Melton College on 30 September 2015 to consider the approval of the College as a partner institution of the University of East Anglia (UEA). Membership of the Institutional Approval Panel is shown in Appendix A.
- 1.2 The Panel met with a range of College staff and a group of students from a range of programmes at the College (as listed in Appendix B). Separate meetings took place with senior staff; academic and administrative staff and students.
- 1.3 Discussions were informed by the Initial Assessment Checklist produced by the Partnerships Office and Brooksby Melton College and a range of supporting documentation including copies of policies and procedures, External Examiner reports, programme reviews, and the submission and output reports from the Autumn 2014 QAA Higher Education Review.

2. Tour of Facilities

- 2.1 Prior to the Institutional Approval Event the Panel Chair and members of the Partnerships Office visited Brooksby Melton College on 17th September and were provided with a tour of teaching and learning facilities on both campuses including the animal care centre, equine centre, theatre, dance studios, media labs, TV studio, beauty salons and restaurant.
- 2.2 UEA's Head of User Services was provided with a tour of the College's Learning Resources Centre and facilities on 10th September. Following the visit, the Head of User Services provided a written report for the Panel which provided assurance that the College's learning resource facilities were adequate.

3. Summary of Discussions

Placements, Practical Learning and Employability

- 3.1 The Panel were interested in the extent to which it was possible for the College to provide meaningful practical experience to their students. College staff stated that the College prided itself on the fact that it produced students who were fit for work. This was achieved through the significant volume of practical activity embedded in their HE programmes, along with the appropriate level and quantity of academic content. A recent injection of capital and substantial redevelopment work over the last year had significantly improved the facilities that enabled the College to provide this practical experience.
- 3.2 Examples of ways in which practical experience was included in programmes included hospitality students getting involved in catering for weddings and events held on campus; performing arts students putting on shows in the theatre on the

Melton campus and elsewhere; practical riding experience being a key part of the equine programmes; and placements at professional sports clubs. It was also noted that the College had strong working partnerships with several employers. For example, Mansfield Town Football Club's Academy was based at the Brooksby campus and Leicester Tigers Rugby Club trained at the College.

- 3.3 College staff stated that the Brooksby campus included a 350 acre working farm and the Panel asked how the strategy of the farm was aligned with the strategy of the College. College Senior Management staff explained that the income from students supported the running of the farm. Although the farm did not make a profit in isolation, the fact that it was run to produce industry standard outputs made it a significant attraction to potential students.
- 3.4 During their discussion with the Panel, students highlighted how much they valued the opportunity for practical experiences on their programmes, citing examples such as entering films into competitions and sports coaching. Students stated that these experiences were also useful for including on their CV and would significantly help them when looking for employment.

Commendation 1: Links with industry and practical opportunities for learning

Commendation 2: Investment in and nature of physical facilities

- 3.5 The Panel noted that some issues had been raised in the 2014/5 QAA Higher Education Review about effective oversight of student's work based learning, including the provision of appropriate support and information for employers. The Panel were interested in how the College has responded to this. It was noted that the College had many mechanisms for ensuring effective oversight of placements including visits to the provider (or a phone call if they were more than 50 miles away) in advance of students commencing placement; provision of an employer handbook for placement providers; and obtaining regular feedback from the employer on students' progress
- 3.6 The College required placement providers to allocate a mentor to all students on placement. Mentors were briefed by the college in advance of students commencing placement and on some programmes a Mentor Handbook was also provided.
- 3.7 The Panel enquired how the College would intervene if a student raised concerns about their experience on placement. College staff stated that they all knew their students very well and if issues were raised these were dealt with promptly and on an individual basis. When students initially contact staff to raise an issue, staff would attempt to calm them down and be supportive. Students would be advised to continue with the placement for the remainder of the day, if they felt it was safe to do. Staff would then discuss the situation further with the student and the placement provider. College staff would also facilitate discussions between the student and the placement provider if appropriate. In discussions with the Panel, students stated that College staff were available on email and phone if they had any problems while on placement and, in their experience, immediately responded to any issues raised.
- 3.8 It was noted that the College's Student Services team maintained a central database of all placement providers and this included records of any concerns raised about the placement. Students also stated that they were able to use this database if they were having difficulty finding a placement.

Student Engagement

- 3.9 The Panel asked College staff how they ensured that student engagement was effective. The Senior Management Team explained that the College had a strategy for listening to students and using this feedback to make improvements. The College had recently invested in a new post in the Student Services Team that had a remit of engaging with students.
- 3.10 The College were aware that, as an organisation which was a mixture of Further and Higher Education, there was a challenge with ensuring student engagement worked

effectively for all students. This was further compounded by the majority of students living off-campus, making effective student engagement more of a challenge. However, the College was very committed to exploring different methods of engagement to accurately capture the experience of students and encourage them to be involved. This required the College to be inventive and consider what works well and not so well for different groups of students.

- 3.11 The Senior Management Team stated the College staff met with Student Representatives every half term. The outputs from these meetings were passed on to managers and also fed into the annual programme review cycle. The College's Director of Learning: Land Based and Student Services reported annually on student engagement and feedback to the College's Quality and Standards Committee.
- 3.12 College staff provided other examples of student engagement including students sitting on staff interview panels, where appropriate, and staff promptly responding to informal feedback from students.
- 3.13 The students who met with the Panel stated that the College was very responsive to students and gave examples of where action had been taken in response to student feedback, including improvement to journal access through the library.
- 3.14 The Panel enquired how action taken in response to student feedback was cascaded to the wider student body. The students who met with the Panel explained that Student Representatives ensured that outputs of student feedback were cascaded to their fellow students. Students also said they received a large amount of contact time with teaching staff and this often provided opportunity for cascading of actions being taken in response to student feedback.

College Strategy

- 3.15 The Panel asked why the College was seeking to change validating partners. The Vice Principal explained that the key factor was the College's desire to increase its HE profile. There was an increase in demand from FE students who wished to progress onto HE programmes at the College and the College was keen to work with a partner that would support this. The College wanted to do this through the foundation degree and top up model and start to run out its HND provision. The College's current validating partner has an issue with providing the subject specialism which would support the College's desired expansion. The College was also seeking a validating partner which would support the College in improving its HE reputation.

Condition 1: Develop an action plan for implementation of UEA validated regulations, policies and procedures and transfer of students to UEA awards from September 2016

- 3.16 The Panel asked if there were any outputs from the QAA Higher Education Review that made the College consider revising its HE strategy. The College Senior Management Team explained that the picture painted during the Review was of a maturing organisation. There was a need for the College to have an increasingly differentiated HE structure through support for factors such as staff scholarly activity, staff recruitment, pay scales and differentiating between content, delivery and learning styles at levels 3, 4, 5 and 6. The College was continuing to work on this.

Condition 2: Develop an action plan for continued enhancement of teaching at Level 6

- 3.17 The Panel enquired about the feasibility of the proposed student recruitment targets and what the impact would be if these numbers were not met. The Senior Management Team acknowledged that the numbers may seem ambitious but the College felt it has a much better opportunity to attract students nationally and improve internal progression if it could offer more foundation and top up programmes as there were issues with the currency of the HND offer.

- 3.18 The College stated that there would be a minimum student number threshold for running each programme. This had yet to be determined. Programmes has been run with as few a six students in the past but it was acknowledged that numbers as low as this might not be conducive to an adequate HE student experience.

Staff Appointment and Development

- 3.19 The Panel asked how the College determined that someone was appropriately qualified to teach at HE level. Staff explained that judgements were made based on academic qualifications and professional experience. All HE teachers were educated to degree level and supporting HE staff in being qualified to Masters level was also prioritised in terms of staff development. The College differentiated the approach to management of time for HE and FE staff, for example through supporting HE staff to undertake scholarly activity, increase their subject knowledge and take on external examining roles.
- 3.20 Academic staff stated that all requests for scholarly activity were reviewed and approved by the College and that, although staff could feel stretched sometimes, particularly those teaching FE and HE, they felt very supported by the College in relation to scholarly activity. If scholarly activity was approved by the College, staff were released from specific amounts of their contracted annual teaching hours
- 3.21 The Senior Management Team stated that the College had a lesson observation policy. However, it realised that there was a need for a specific HE lesson observation policy as the requirements were different to those of FE. For example, HE staff would be expected to demonstrate more supportive and closer engagement with students. The College had already commenced work with a team of consultants to develop an HE specific lesson observation policy.

Recommendation 1: Further develop HE specific teaching observations

- 3.22 The Panel enquired how good practice was shared across the two campuses. Staff explained that they work very closely together across programmes and across the two sites. Examples of this included attending other teams' HE meetings, guest lecturing in other departments, regular cross campus meetings and sharing best practice via group emails.

Staff Support for Students

- 3.23 Academic staff stated that they aimed to make the close and supportive relationship between staff and students a key positive of the HE student experience at the College. Comments from students that the Panel met with strongly supported the fact that the College was successfully achieving this aim, through high levels of contact time. This strong, supportive relationship was complemented by a high level of staff expertise, both from practitioners with significant industry experience and lecturers engaged in scholarly activity.
- 3.24 It was also noted that academic staff worked very closely with students at Level 3 who wish to progress to HE programmes.

Commendation 3: Support for students and staff enthusiasm and commitment.

Facilities

- 3.25 During their meeting with the Panel students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the facilities with the exception of car parking availability at the Melton campus.
- 3.26 The students stated that the Learning Resources support was good, particularly as there had been improvements in relation to the availability of journals.
- 3.27 Students highlighted that access to Wi-Fi in the Brooksby accommodation could be problematic and that it would be helpful to have extended hours access to computer labs.

Commendation 2: Investment in and nature of physical facilities

Recommendation 2: Develop a plan to enable student access to resources outside lesson times and improve IT infrastructure

Student Transition

- 3.28 The Panel noted the College's close and supportive working relationship with students but were keen to understand how the College aligned this with the requirement for students to develop as independent HE learners. The academic staff explained that the approach did vary depending on the individual needs of the student, but that the live projects and practical work based experiences the students received throughout the programmes, enabled students to "stand on their own two feet" and act independently.
- 3.29 The Panel asked the students what they understood to be the main differences between HE and FE. Students stated that you had to work much harder and undertake a lot more research and independent learning at HE level. Students said they were required to undertake more responsibility for their own learning.

Engagement with QAA Quality Code

- 3.30 The Panel asked staff how they individually engaged with the QAA Quality Code. Staff explained that they were involved in developing documentation in preparation for the QAA Higher Education Review and participated in practice sessions in advance of the Review. Staff also stated that they engaged with the Quality Code through the College's Quality Improvement Plan.

Accessibility of Policies and Procedures

- 3.31 The Panel enquired how staff made themselves aware of the current policies and procedures. The staff explained that these were available on the virtual learning environment, Moodle. In addition, a meeting was held with staff at the beginning of term to disseminate changes to policies and procedures. New staff were made aware of College policies and procedures as part of their staff induction.
- 3.32 The Panel also asked students where they would look for policies and procedures and they stated that these were available on Moodle. The students said that if they were unclear about anything or had a query related to policies and procedures they would ask the Student Services Team for advice.
- 3.33 The Panel asked staff what they would do if a student came to them wanting to make an academic appeal. Staff stated that they would try to resolve the matter informally within the department. If this wasn't possible the student would then be advised to speak to the HE Development Manager; Teaching and Learning regarding how to make a formal appeal.

Virtual Learning Environment

- 3.34 Students were asked what what documentation was available on module specific Moodle sites. Students stated that the information included assignment briefs, module handbooks, lecture notes, relevant extra information such as journals and forums for any questions

Proposed Collaboration with UEA

- 3.35 The Panel asked College staff what they were expecting from UEA in any future validation relationship. Staff stated that they would like to work with UEA for guidance on development and implementation of policies and procedures. Staff were also keen to develop academic links with UEA and share best practice.

4. Summary of Conclusions

4.1 The Institutional Approval Panel recommends to the Senate of the University of East Anglia that Brooksby Melton College be approved as a partner institution of the University for a period of up to five years commencing September 2016, subject to the following conditions and recommendations. The action plan for meeting these is included in Appendix C.

4.2 Conditions:

4.2.1 Develop an action plan for implementation of UEA validated regulations, policies and procedures and transfer of students to UEA awards from September 2016

4.2.2 Develop an action plan for continued enhancement of teaching at Level 6

4.3 Recommendations:

4.3.1 Further develop HE specific teaching observations

4.3.2 Develop a plan to enable student access to resources outside lesson times and improve IT infrastructure

4.4 Commendations

The review Panel commended the College on:

4.4.1 Links with industry and practical opportunities for learning

4.4.2 Investment in and nature of physical facilities

4.4.3 Support for students and staff enthusiasm and commitment.

4.5 Deadline for responses to conditions and recommendations

Responses to the conditions should be submitted by 31st December 2015, and recommendations by 31st May 2016. Responses should be submitted to the Secretary to the Institutional Approval Panel for consideration by the Panel Chair.

Panel Membership

Professor Ian Dewing, Academic Director of Partnerships, UEA (Chair)

Professor David Hopkins, Dean of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Royal Agricultural University (External Panel Member)

Professor Alastair Grant, Professor of Ecology, School of Environmental Sciences, UEA

Mrs Sally Walker, Head of Partnerships, UEA

Ms Lynn Barrett, HE Development Manager, Teaching and Learning (Internal Panel member)

Mr William Newbury, Student Union President, Brooksby Melton College (Student Representative)

Mr Gavin Tasha, Senior Partnerships Manager, UEA (Secretary)

Members of School Staff and Students Involved in Discussions with the Panel

Senior Staff

Mark Bendle, Vice Principal

Maureen Nelson, Director of Learning: Land Based and Student Services

Academic Staff

Steve Fossey, Programme Team Manager; Performing Arts and Media

Martin Foster, Programme Team Manager; Sport

Paul Smith, Programme Leader/ Lecturer; Digital Film Technology

Charlotte Farmer-Day, Programme Leader/ Lecturer; Equine Performance Science

Lesley Wojnarowicz, Programme Leader/ Lecturer; Animal Management

Peter Groves, Programme Leader/ Lecturer; Performing Arts

Administrative Staff

Mark Session, MIS Manager

Amy Fox, Marketing Manager

Students Involved in Discussions with the Panel:

Harrison Connor, Digital Film

Taylor Connor, Digital Film

Hope Williams, Equine Management

Amy Tate, Equine Management

Ellie Moxon, Animal Management

Tessa Smithson, Animal Management

Laura Wheat, Performing Arts

Jak Beasley, Performing Arts

Megan Porter, Sport

Oliver Veasey, Sport

Amy Hollingworth, Countryside

Matthew Russell, Countryside

Robin Eaves, Student Engagement Coordinator (BMC Staff)

**Institutional Approval Outcomes Action Plan
Brooksby Melton College
30 September 2015**

The Institutional Approval Panel resolved to recommend to the Senate of the University of East Anglia that the Brooksby Melton College be approved as a partner institution of the University for a period of up to five years commencing September 2016 subject to the following conditions and recommendations.

Outcomes				College Response
Type*	No	Details	Deadline	
CON	1.	<i>Develop an action plan for implementation of UEA validated regulations, policies and procedures and transfer of students to UEA awards from September 2016</i>	<i>31st December 2015</i>	The college accepts the Conditions & recommendations of the Review panel. The college has completed an action plan address the Conditions and Recommendations – see attached.
CON	2.	<i>Develop an action plan for continued enhancement of teaching at Level 6</i>	<i>31st December 2015</i>	<i>See attached action plan.</i>
REC	3.	<i>Further develop HE specific teaching observations</i>	<i>Respond by 31 May 2016</i>	<i>See attached action plan.</i>
REC	4.	<i>Develop a plan to enable student access to resources outside lesson times and improve IT infrastructure</i>	<i>Respond by 31 May 2016</i>	<i>See attached action plan.</i>

* Outcome Types: Con (Condition) – must be completed before institutional approval can be confirmed
Req (Requirement) - must be completed by given deadline
Rec (Recommendation) – must be responded to by given deadline

UEA Institutional Review Action Plan

Strat Ref No	Area of Development	Actions to be undertaken	Action Owner	RAG	Due By
1	To develop a transition plan for move to UEA for 16/17	Marketing & recruitment activities approved by UEA to include new programmes and UCAS tariffs.	SW		End of October 15
		Student consultation by subject area regarding moving to UEA programmes for 16/17. To include written confirmation of all changes to all potential student once outcome is known	SW/LB		Mid November 15
		Focused study skills tutorials every month throughout the year to further develop academic written, research and analytical skills	SW/LB		Ongoing from November 15
		Confirmation of progression profile and/or activity needed to progress in to UEA programmes	GT/SW		Mid November 15
		Final decision on HNC moving to Fd second year. BMC internal management decision following staff and student consultation. 1 st Years and TU to go ahead as planned.	GT/SW		Mid November 15
		Written confirmation of all approvals to all potential students once outcome validation is known.	GT/SW		End of March 16
		Work experience - Update policies, practice and handbooks to reflect UEA & QAA feedback	SW/LB		
		Bridging assignment distributed, submitted and marked.	LB		May – Aug 16
		Early handout of Programme Handbook and Policies to allow progressing student notification of changes for 16/17.	SW/LB		End of June 16

* Outcome Types: Con (Condition) – must be completed before institutional approval can be confirmed
Req (Requirement) - must be completed by given deadline
Rec (Recommendation) – must be responded to by given deadline

Appendix C

		Swift turn round of Exam board progression data/confirmations to include 120 exemptions and grade profiles. Subject to UEA approval.	SW/LB		End of May 16
		Enhanced student induction for all UEA students focusing on assessment, programme structure and policies.	SW/LB		End of Sept 16
		Update /align policies with UEA.	GT/SW		End of May 16
2	HE6 staff development	Ensure that the college become members of HEA and consider options for professional development through fellowship recognition.	SW/LB		End of Sept 16
		Ensure that a greater emphasis is placed on scholarly activity with an increased uptake of research / industry focused projects for 16/17 and beyond. To include work based practice and/or research projects with UEA masters/PhD programmes.	SW/LB		End of Sept 16
		Continue to ensure that all staff teaching on HE hold a qualification at or above the level they are teaching.	SW/LB		Ongoing
		Provide all HE staff with an enhanced lecturer handbook providing further clarification on Level 5 /6 assessment, teaching, contact hours and scholarly activity.	SW/LB		End of Feb 16
3	HE6 Lesson Observation	Embedded the new HE Peer observation / learning walk process.	SW/LB		End of Feb 16
		Process to include professional discussions with staff and student feedback on academic challenge and rigour and programme development.	SW/LB		End of Feb 16
		Results reported via annual self-assessment reporting process.	SW/LB		End of Oct 16
4	IT Access	Internet access is being reviewed and tested in all the accommodation blocks.	SW/LB		End of Feb 16
		Brooksby IT learning suite open times to be reviewed and new times published.	SW/LB		End of Feb 16
		Melton IT learning suite is already open Mon – Fri until late (10pm) and Saturday opening. This will be published more widely.	SW/LB		End of Feb 16

* Outcome Types: Con (Condition) – must be completed before institutional approval can be confirmed
Req (Requirement) - must be completed by given deadline
Rec (Recommendation) – must be responded to by given deadline

* Outcome Types: Con (Condition) – must be completed before institutional approval can be confirmed
Req (Requirement) - must be completed by given deadline
Rec (Recommendation) – must be responded to by given deadline