

LTC15D087

Title: Report from the meeting of the University Campus Suffolk Joint Academic Committee
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Date: January 2016
Circulation: Learning and Teaching Committee – 27 January 2016
Agenda: LTC15A003
Version: Final
Status: Open

Report from the meeting of the University Campus Suffolk Joint Academic Committee held on 4 November 2015

Issue

Attached at Appendix 1 is a report from the meeting of the University Campus Suffolk Joint Academic Committee held on 4 November 2015.

Recommendation

The Learning and Teaching Committee is invited to approve the below recommendations from the meeting of the University Campus Suffolk Joint Academic Committee held on 4 November 2015

1 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF UCS AT SUFFOLK NEW COLLEGE

Recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University of Essex

that UCS at Suffolk New College be re-approved as a partner institution as outlined in Appendix A, for a period of five years commencing September 2015.

2 VALIDATION OF NEW COURSES

Recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University of Essex

that the following courses be approved for a period of five years, commencing September 2015:

UCS Bury St Edmunds

- BA (Hons) Graphic and Communication Design

UCS Great Yarmouth

- BA (Hons) Applied Care Practice (Early Years)
- BA (Hons) Applied Care Practice (Children & Young People)
- BA (Hons) Applied Care Practice (Adult)

UCS Ipswich

- BSc (Hons) Network Engineering
- BSc (Hons) Software Engineering
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (*Tending Hundred Primary SCITT*)

3 REVALIDATION OF EXISTING COURSES

Recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University of Essex

that the following courses be reapproved for a period of five years commencing September 2015:

UCS Ipswich

- BA (Hons) Business Management
- BA (Hons) Event Management
- BA (Hons) Tourism Management
- BA (Hons) Interior Architecture and Design

that the following course be reapproved for a period of five years commencing September 2015, with a change of title:

UCS Ipswich

From:

- BA (Hons) Event Management and Tourism Management

To:

- BA (Hons) Event and Tourism Management

4 CHANGE OF COURSE TITLE

Recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University of Essex

that the following change of course title be approved from September 2015:

UCS Bury St Edmunds

From:

- BA (Hons) Interior Design

To:

- BA (Hons) Applied Interior Design

5 COURSE SUSPENSIONS

Recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University of Essex

that the following courses be suspended for 2015/16:

UCS Great Yarmouth

- BA (Hons) Lifelong Learning Practice
- FdA Creative Music
- BA (Hons) Photographic and Digital Media

UCS Ipswich

- BA (Hons) Dance
- FdA Management for the Heritage Sector
- PGCert Professional Practice in Heritage Management
- PGDip Professional Practice in Heritage Management
- MA Professional Practice in Heritage Management
- MSc Regenerative Medicine

6 COURSE DISCONTINUATIONS

Recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University of Essex

that the following courses be discontinued from 2015/16:

UCS Bury St Edmunds

- BA (Hons) Business Management and Entrepreneurship

UCS Great Yarmouth

- FdSc Mechanical Engineering
- FdSc Electronic Engineering
- FdSc Electrical Engineering

Resource Implications

None identified.

Risk Implications

None identified.

Equality and Diversity

Not applicable.

Further Information

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Attachments

Appendix 1 - report from the meeting of the University Campus Suffolk Joint Academic Committee held on 4 November 2015.

UNIVERSITY CAMPUS SUFFOLK JOINT ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

REPORT TO UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA LEARNING AND TEACHING
COMMITTEE AND UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Report from the meeting of the University Campus Suffolk Joint Academic
Committee held on 4 November 2015

ITEMS FOR DECISION

1 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW OF UCS AT SUFFOLK NEW COLLEGE

**Recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the
University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University
of Essex**

that UCS at Suffolk New College be re-approved as a
partner institution as outlined in Appendix A, for a period of
five years commencing September 2015.

2 VALIDATION OF NEW COURSES

**Recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the
University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University
of Essex**

that the following courses be approved for a period of five
years, commencing September 2015:

UCS Bury St Edmunds

- BA (Hons) Graphic and Communication Design

UCS Great Yarmouth

- BA (Hons) Applied Care Practice (Early Years)
- BA (Hons) Applied Care Practice (Children & Young People)
- BA (Hons) Applied Care Practice (Adult)

UCS Ipswich

- BSc (Hons) Network Engineering
- BSc (Hons) Software Engineering
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education
(*Tending Hundred Primary SCITT*)

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University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University
of Essex**

that the following courses be reapproved for a period of
five years commencing September 2015:

UCS Ipswich

- BA (Hons) Business Management
- BA (Hons) Event Management
- BA (Hons) Tourism Management
- BA (Hons) Interior Architecture and Design

that the following course be reapproved for a period of five years commencing September 2015, with a change of title:

UCS Ipswich

From:

- BA (Hons) Event Management and Tourism Management

To:

- BA (Hons) Event and Tourism Management

4 CHANGE OF COURSE TITLE

Recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University of Essex

that the following change of course title be approved from September 2015:

UCS Bury St Edmunds

From:

- BA (Hons) Interior Design

To:

- BA (Hons) Applied Interior Design

5 COURSE SUSPENSIONS

Recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University of Essex

that the following courses be suspended for 2015/16:

UCS Great Yarmouth

- BA (Hons) Lifelong Learning Practice
- FdA Creative Music
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UCS Ipswich

- BA (Hons) Dance
- FdA Management for the Heritage Sector
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- MA Professional Practice in Heritage Management
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6 COURSE DISCONTINUATIONS

Recommended to the Learning and Teaching Committee of the University of East Anglia and the Education Committee of the University of Essex

that the following courses be discontinued from 2015/16:

UCS Bury St Edmunds

- BA (Hons) Business Management and Entrepreneurship

UCS Great Yarmouth

- FdSc Mechanical Engineering
- FdSc Electronic Engineering
- FdSc Electrical Engineering

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

1 UPDATE ON QAA HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW (HER) ACTION PLAN

Noted

Following the QAA HER in November 2014, UCS produced an action plan to address the recommendations. The action plan also outlined steps that would be taken to address areas of enhancement that were identified as part of the review.

An update was provided on the progress made and specifically the recommendation related to the accuracy of published information. It was noted that the overall responsibility rested with the Head of Marketing and Communications, supported by an Operations Manager and mechanisms had been implemented to ensure the ongoing accuracy of information. This included a Published Information Group which met annually to review information, internal audits, which accompanied the reviews of the website and student handbooks carried out by the Universities. Updates to the course webpages would be conducted at two key points during the year and a new course template had been produced to ensure all information was captured at the outset. Regular reviews of information would also be conducted through course committees and team meetings throughout the year.

It was noted that a decision had been taken to review the UCS website in its entirety, with a new website due to be introduced by 2016/17. In addition the implications of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) report for UK Higher Education providers – advice on consumer protection law, had been taken into account. A progress update would be provided in autumn 2016.

2 UPDATE ON TAUGHT DEGREE AWARDING POWERS (TDAP) PROCESS

Noted

The TDAP scrutiny panel had submitted their report to the

QAA Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP), followed by the QAA Board. From here the report had been submitted to the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and onto the Privy Council. The Provost confirmed that to date no feedback had been received.

Secretary's note: Subsequently on 5 November 2015, UCS received confirmation from the Privy Council that UCS Ipswich had been granted Taught Degree Awarding Powers. UCS would now submit their application for University title. The Universities would continue to work alongside UCS during the transition period.

3 NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS) RESULTS 2015

Noted

Members received a breakdown of the National Student Survey 2015 results by Department and Learning Network Centre. The overall level of satisfaction for UCS was 3% higher than 2014. There had also been an increase in the scores related to assessment and feedback with an increase of 8% from 66% to 74%, for the question related to the promptness of feedback and an increase of 5% from 67% to 73%, for the question related to the helpfulness of feedback in clarifying points that were not understood. The scores for learning resources overall had increased by 1% to 81%, but that this was still lower than the UK national average of 86%. It was noted that although satisfaction with the Library resources had increased over a number of years, it had now plateaued at 79%, and was lower than the UK national average of 87%.

Across the Learning Network Centres UCS Great Yarmouth was congratulated for achieving an overall student satisfaction score of 91%, which was an increase of 9% from 2014. A full breakdown of the scores by Department had been provided to Heads of Department and course teams. It was noted that there had been some variation between courses and that all results would be followed up through the annual monitoring process (RiME) with NSS action plans put in place.

4 REPORT ON THE PGR STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Members received a report on the Postgraduate Research Student Experience Focus group held during spring 2014/15 with UCS research degree students, who are registered at either UEA or Essex in addition to UCS. There were four emerging themes identified:

- the supervisory team and other support;
- professional development;
- overall experience; and
- the way forward: suggestions received from PhD students.

An action plan had been developed to address the

themes. It was noted that a full discussion of the report had taken place at the UCS PGR sub-committee which included representation from both Universities.

5 NEW COURSES APPROVED TO PROCEED TO PUBLICITY AND VALIDATION

Approved The following new courses were approved to proceed to publicity and validation:

UCS Bury St Edmunds

- BSc (Hons) Computer Games Technology
- BSc (Hons) Information Technology Service Management
- BSc (Hons) Software Development

UCS Great Yarmouth

- FdSc Wildlife Conservation and Animal Management

UCS Ipswich

- Level 4 short course in Evidence Based Policing
- BSc (Hons) Criminology and Law
- BSc (Hons) Sociology
- BSc (Hons) Sports Coaching
- LLB (Hons) Law with Criminology
- LLB (Hons) Law with Sociology
- MSci Football Coaching
- MSci Performance Analysis for Football
- MSci Sports Performance Physiology for Football
- MSci Sports Psychology for Football
- MSci Strength and Conditioning for Football
- MSc Evidenced Based Policing

6 EXISTING COURSES APPROVED TO PROCEED TO REVALIDATION

Approved The following courses were approved to proceed to revalidation:

UCS Bury St Edmunds

- BA (Hons) English and History
- BA (Hons) English and Psychology
- BA (Hons) History and Sociology
- BA (Hons) Business Management and Psychology
- BSc (Hons) Psychology and Sociology

UCS Great Yarmouth

- BA (Hons) Arts Practice

UCS Ipswich

- Level 4 Dental Radiography module
- FdSc Communication Technologies: Network Engineering
- FdSc Communication Technologies Software

- Engineering
- BA (Hons) Photography
- BA (Hons) Sociology and Youth Studies
- BSc (Hons) Criminology and Sociology
- BSc (Hons) Criminology and Youth Studies
- BSc (Hons) Criminology
- BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography
- BSc (Hons) Psychology and Sociology
- BSc (Hons) Psychology and Youth Studies
- BSc (Hons) Psychology and Criminology
- BSc (Hons) Psychology and Early Childhood Studies
- BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy and Oncology
- PGDip Human Resource Management
- MA Arts Practice
- MA Childhood and Youth Studies
- MA Clinical Effectiveness
- MA Leadership and Service Innovation
- MA Learning and Teaching
- MSc Human Resource Management
- MSc Regenerative Medicine

UCS Lowestoft

- BA (Hons) Design

7 PROFESSIONAL OR STATUTORY REGULATORY BODY (PSRB) ACTIVITY

Noted	General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Practice Certificate in Independent Prescribing for Pharmacists (V300P)
Noted	Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ BSc (Hons) Paramedic Science
Noted	Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), Monitoring Report

Rachel Frost
 Secretary to the UCS Joint Academic Committee
 Senior Academic Standards and Partnerships Manager
 University of Essex
 January 2016

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA AND UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX**Report of the Institutional Review of University Campus Suffolk at
Suffolk New College
2 June 2015****1. Introduction and Background**

1.1 An Institutional Review panel met at UCS at Suffolk New College on Tuesday 2 June 2015 to consider the re-approval of UCS at Suffolk New College (UCS SNC) as a partner institution of the University of East Anglia (UEA) and the University of Essex (Essex). Membership of the Institutional Review panel is shown in Appendix A. The previous Institutional Review was held on 30 March 2010. Senior management, teaching staff and employer representatives who met the panel are included in Appendix B.

1.2 UCS SNC currently delivers the following courses:

- FdSc Civil Engineering
- BSc (Hons) Civil Engineering [progression route]
- Certificate in Education (CertEd)
- Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

During the review the Panel met with a group of five Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students and a student currently studying on the FdSc Civil Engineering programme.

1.3 Discussions were informed by an evaluative report on the operation and management of the partnership produced by the validating universities and a self-evaluation document prepared by UCS SNC, accompanied by a range of supporting documentation.

2. Tour of Facilities

2.1 The Panel was provided with a tour of facilities including the HE library provision in *The Learning Curve*, carpentry and joinery workshops and the Materials Laboratory where Civil Engineering students studied structures, hydraulics, soil sampling and geology. The Panel was informed that load testing and concrete crushing was analysed in the laboratory.

2.2 It was noted that the Materials Laboratory had undergone extensive upgrading to its equipment following an investment of £12,500 in 2013. The Panel was pleased to note the increased expenditure on resources for the Materials Laboratory and the course team's intention to insulate the ceiling as a noise reduction measure.

Summary of Discussions**3. Strategic direction**

3.1 It was noted that both programmes currently running at the College had been recently re-validated. The ITE programme was re-validated in June 2012 and the Civil Engineering programmes; the Foundation Degree and the Honours Degree (Progression route), were re-validated in 2014. The Panel agreed that as the provision at the College had been reviewed relatively recently and there was no particular problem with the content of either programme, they would concentrate their discussions on the Institution as a whole.

- 3.2 Discussion took place amongst Panel members about the sustainability of the small amount of HE provision at the College. It was noted that the College had not reviewed its HE strategy in the academic year 2014-15 as originally intended because the current Principal was retiring and a new Principal would be in place before the new academic year commenced. The Panel agreed that an HE strategy was important and recognised that the relatively small amount of provision and low student numbers made it difficult to maintain an HE ethos and this could impact on the student experience.
- 3.3 It was noted that there had been comments recorded in the Course Committee meetings, and later confirmed during the discussion with students, that students would have liked their courses to be taught in the University Campus Suffolk Waterfront building instead of the College as they felt that it would be a more suitable environment for their HE learning experience. The Panel were also aware that there had not been any student representation on the Centre Academic Committee although they acknowledged that attendance for working students would be difficult.
- 3.4 The meeting with Senior Management focused on the strategic direction of HE in the College. The Principal confirmed that the strategic direction for the coming five years had not been debated in full and would be addressed when the new Principal was in post. He confirmed that when the new strategy was developed it would incorporate Higher Apprenticeships. The Senior Management team told the Panel of their decision to concentrate on retaining a small amount of specialist provision and to continue using the ITE provision as a means of supporting their own staff.
- 3.5 The Panel asked if the College anticipated growth in HE provision and the Principal responded that this was a decision for the new Principal. He confirmed that there had been discussion concerning potential Foundation degree links with the department of Science and Technology at UCS Ipswich. It was also anticipated that the College's links with Suffolk County Council could lead to the development of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) provision. The Principal noted that the types of activity being considered for delivery at UCS SNC such as HND/HNC awards and Higher Apprenticeships was different to the provision offered by UCS Ipswich and stressed that they did not want to go into competition with UCS Ipswich.
- 3.6 Employer relations were discussed with the Senior Management Team and it was noted that once in post the new Principal would meet Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) priorities. Senior Management emphasised the *Good Ofsted* report outcome for their ITE provision and the successful model of part-time delivery in the work place for the Civil Engineering programme. They noted that the Civil Engineering programme had recently been reaccredited by the Joint Board of Moderators (JBM) and the course team also had significant involvement with the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB). The Civil Engineering course team enjoyed strong employer links through their Industry Liaison Group and had forged strong links with Suffolk County Council, BT Research Centre at Martlesham and a number of other providers in the local area. Members of the Senior Management team confirmed that the College had engaged with Suffolk County Council on the provision of apprenticeships which fed into the Civil Engineering programme.
- 3.7 Student progression was discussed and possible reasons why Foundation Degree Civil Engineering students did not progress to Level 3 courses within UCS were explored. The Senior Management team confirmed that all

foundation degree students were in employment and many second year students held managerial positions and therefore did not seek further qualifications. It was noted that a full-time Civil Engineering Honours programme in addition to the progression route was being considered.

- 3.8 The Panel asked the Senior Managers about FE and HE engagement with employers. The team responded that tutors from both FE and HE were involved in links with employers. Breakfast meetings were held which targeted employers and the Industrial Liaison Group provided feedback on what employers and trainers such as the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), East of England Energy and EDF energy required. The Panel advised the Senior Management team to map these requirements to the HE strategy.
- 3.9 The Panel then went on to examine the HE student experience with Senior Managers who informed the Panel about student representation on committees and how as a result of student representation delivery on the ITE programme had been reviewed. The Panel questioned the team on why they thought that scores for Organisation and Management had declined in the National Student Survey results and enquired if tutors taught both FE and HE, which was thought to be a possible cause. It was reported that Civil Engineering had 1.5 members of permanent staff who taught mainly HE and due to the specialist nature of the course, there was a bank of specialist staff who contributed. ITE had 4 permanent members of staff and the course lead was also responsible for observations.
- 3.10 The Panel sought information on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and how tutors linked their FE and HE responsibilities and their Research and Scholarly Activity. The Panel noted in Section 16 of the Self-evaluation document (SED) that staff engaged in 5 days of self-directed CPD throughout the year and 5 days of College directed CPD although there had been little explanation in the SED of the impact the activity had on teaching. The Panel agreed that there was not an expectation for staff to be research active but it was expected for research to be embedded in the curriculum. The Panel acknowledged that staff required time to engage with CPD and scholarly activity and enquired what institutional support the College gave staff.
- 3.11 It was reported that members of staff attended Learning and Teaching days at both the validating Universities and CPD along with guest speakers was delivered at the College. The Panel asked Senior Managers how research-informed teaching was incorporated in the provision and in response it was noted that staff attended the Learning Teaching Assessment Group (LTAG) at the UCS hub. Senior staff drew the Panel's attention to an example of research-informed teaching when one member of staff had used the CPD time to embed English and Maths in the FE curriculum. When asked about the mechanisms for appraising staff the team confirmed that yearly appraisals took place and it was noted that there was an agreement that classroom observations could take place in accordance with the College's own procedures with the option of also participating in the UCS peer review.
- 3.12 During discussion with the course teams, the Panel asked how useful they found the termly submission of their CPD report. The Civil Engineering team confirmed that it was helpful, as keeping their technical log current was a requirement of the Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE). The external adviser then enquired if the course teams had been involved in developing pedagogical work. The ITE representative confirmed that the team had worked with UCS Bury St Edmunds to develop the programme to meet industry standard.

- 3.13 The external expert then asked the course teams about the different characteristics of the full-time and part-time courses. ITE confirmed that there was a different approach in the professional practice modules where the team adapted what was expected in teaching placements. Civil Engineering confirmed that they were having discussions with UCS Ipswich about curriculum development and noted that their part-time students were employed and had the benefit of part-time tutors who had experience in large companies.

4. Student retention and recruitment

- 4.1 Discussions took place amongst Panel members about student recruitment. The Panel wanted to explore the reasons why recruitment to the ITE programme had halved from 96 in 2011-12 to 48 in 2013-14 and how robust the current level of recruitment was to the programme. It was acknowledged that ITE provision was important to the College's own staff development provision. It was noted that recruitment and support for progression had been discussed at the Centre Academic Committee. Senior Managers believed that the withdrawal of the 6 credit Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) award had led to the decline in numbers.
- 4.2 The Panel also noted that the Year 1 FdSc Civil Engineering had zero intake although it was noted that the previous year's recruitment had been high with 20 students progressing. The course team believed that the numbers were part of a two-yearly cycle and were expecting improvements for the following year. The Panel was pleased to note the high levels of student retention in the Civil Engineering programme. The Panel also wanted to examine the extent of progression from FE. It was noted that the route was not as successful as the College would like it to be but the recruitment team were aware and seeking to address it.
- 4.3 During discussion with the course teams, the Panel asked where they felt the future direction of the programmes was heading. The Civil Engineering team acknowledged they had been concerned about the poor recruitment to the Foundation degree but felt the financial climate and industry restructuring had led to those exceptional circumstances. The team was pleased to report there had been 14 applicants to the programme for this academic year and a link with the UCS telecommunications team was being discussed for future provision.

5. HE Experience

- 5.1 Discussion with the students confirmed that many of the ITE students used the UCS Ipswich library extensively because of longer opening hours and quiet areas although the students noted that they did not use the other facilities available there. The online access to journals at UCS SNC was praised by the students who welcomed the ability to access them from home. The students also praised the College Library staff for the level of support they provided.
- 5.2 ITE students told the Panel that they found the juxtaposition of studying and teaching at the same institution difficult and felt that it would be beneficial to their HE experience to have their lessons delivered at UCS Ipswich and their work-based learning at UCS SNC. This opinion was echoed by the Civil Engineering student who told the Panel that he felt there was more of an HE

environment at UCS Ipswich. The students told the Panel that they had requested that more lessons, other than the initial induction, should take place at the Waterfront building at UCS Ipswich.

- 5.3 The Panel wanted to explore how the induction process worked and the students confirmed that they had received useful guidance at induction although the Students' Union session had been aimed at younger 'freshers' and not for the mature students taking PGCE courses. Some postgraduate students wanted Cert Ed students and PGCE students taught separately as their previous university experience had given them prior knowledge of HE expectations such as referencing.
- 5.4 The Panel wanted to know about the opportunities that existed for students to provide feedback to their teaching staff. The students explained that this happened via their course representatives on course committees. Comments were fed through to the Centre Academic Committee although students did not attend this meeting. The Panel wanted to expand the discussion and explore any informal communications and whether students felt they had been listened to or if anything had changed as a result of informal discussions. In response the students told the Panel that they had been listened to and some improvements had been made as a result of these communications, such as the change of deadlines for the ITE course.
- 5.5 During the discussion with the students it became clear to the Panel that part-time ITE students had the perception that they did not receive the same HE experience as the full-time ITE students. They told the Panel that they could not access the website to enrol and had found that their experience of the course had been different to the full-time students.
- 5.6 The students praised the quality of the teaching, variety of assessments and feedback they received. ITE students raised differing opinions on the amount of practical versus the amount of academic work with some claiming too much theory and others not enough. They expressed disappointment with external visits and guest lecturers with one student noting that they had been there a year and had only been taught by colleagues. When asked what they thought the College could do to improve the provision, the ITE students requested that they would like to observe colleagues at UCS Bury St Edmunds. The Civil Engineering student praised the two main tutors and told the Panel that the course had been a massive help in preparing him for industry.

6. Discussion with Course teams

- 6.1 The Panel asked the course teams about managing the challenges of working in small teams. The ITE team did not feel there were any issues as although small they had a reliable and supportive team. The Civil Engineering team acknowledged that as there were only the two of them their situation was more precarious but they worked well together and breadth of coverage was provided by visiting specialists. The teams confirmed that they would ask if and when help was required.
- 6.2 When asked if the teams felt they were supported by the Institution, the teams confirmed that they felt supported. The Civil Engineering team had requested training for soil analysis and received it. The students had asked why they were not taught at the UCS Waterfront building and the teams had requested further information about the possibility of changing teaching locations. Extra maths support for students had also been provided. The ITE team noted that

students were consulted regularly both formally and informally and openly asked where they thought improvements could be made. Student feedback was taken seriously via student representatives and the RiME process.

- 6.3 The Panel asked the course teams where they saw the future of their HE provision and how they communicated with Senior Management. The Civil Engineering team told how they hoped to expand and strengthen their links with industry and research with local companies and to develop specialist modules and a full-time Civil Engineering honours programme. They aimed for more publications and to become a centre for industry short courses. The ITE team enjoyed consistent recruitment and did not anticipate expansion of the programme; instead they wished to focus on high quality delivery and a strong calibre of student who would have the ability to complete a rigorous course.
- 6.4 The Panel asked the course teams about their experience delivering provision under the UCS umbrella and how they accessed UCS support. The teams confirmed that they enjoyed good links with the Partnerships Office and with the Quality Enhancement Office at UCS Ipswich.

7. Employer engagement

- 7.1 The Panel discussed how actively employers were involved in the development of the programmes. It was noted in the Self-evaluation document that employer representatives were invited to attend the Centre Academic Committee but did not attend as they preferred to engage at Course Committee level instead. During the meeting with the employer representatives, the employers were asked if they had any influence in setting the curriculum and if they contributed to the programmes. The employers noted that they were invited to, and attended, the breakfast briefings held for local industry representatives but were not involved in the formation of the curriculum.
- 7.2 The Suffolk County Council (SCC) representative reported that the council had employed Civil Engineering graduates although some had struggled with the mathematics element. The Skanska employer agreed that mathematics knowledge had been an issue.
- 7.3 The Panel asked the employer representatives if they felt the College supported their requirements for graduate skills. The employers responded that the College had not asked what the employers required. There was an industry liaison group but some of the employers had not attended. The employers' focus was on professional qualifications and both the Council representative and the Skanska representative felt it was a pity that there was not a Masters level qualification available in Civil Engineering. The employers were then asked about possibility of Higher Apprenticeships and they welcomed the possibility of a clear linear recruitment strategy. It was noted that some of the ITE students were on placement at the College and feedback had been consistently good.
- 7.4 When asked if there were more things that the College could do, the employers wanted to see a focus on contemporary industry needs such as 3D modelling in curriculum design. The SCC representative wanted to see more scope to support practical areas and individual bespoke modules such as the *Lantra* awards.

- 7.5 The Council representative was pleased to note the external accreditation and suggested accreditation from The Engineering Council was also considered.

8. Conclusion

The Panel recognised the importance of the College to the local area and regional employers but advised strategic forward thinking to ensure future growth.

The Panel recommended to the Senates of the University of East Anglia and the University of Essex that UCS at Suffolk New College be re-approved as a partner institution for both Universities for a period of five years commencing September 2015 subject to the following requirement and recommendations:

Requirement

1. UCS at Suffolk New College to finalise their HE strategy by no later than the start of academic year 2016-17 and to regularly report on progress to the UCS Joint Academic Committee

Recommendations

1. Review the curriculum offer in relation to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) and in consultation with regional employers and relevant stakeholders.
2. Identify and implement ways to differentiate the HE experience clearly from the FE experience throughout the student lifecycle and to produce a report of that exercise to the Joint Academic Committee.

Deadline for responses

The initial report on the status of the requirement to be submitted to the Secretary of the Joint Academic Committee (JAC) by the published deadlines for JAC papers for consideration by the UCS Joint Academic Committee in November 2015.

A response to the recommendations should be submitted to the Secretary of the Joint Academic Committee (JAC) by the published deadlines for JAC papers for consideration by the UCS Joint Academic Committee in November 2015.

Jeanie Armstrong
Academic Standards and Partnerships Manager
University of Essex