SEN17D010

University of East Anglia

Title:	**Proposed New Institutional Partnership – South Essex College**
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Circulation:	Senate – 8 November 2017
Agenda:	SEN17A001
Version:	Final
Status:	Open

Issue

Approval of South Essex College as a partner institution of UEA.

Recommendation

Senate is asked to endorse the recommendation made by the Learning and Teaching Committee at its meeting on 18 October that South Essex College be approved as a partner institution of the University for a period of up to four years.

In making its recommendation, LTC considered the report from the Institutional Approval event held on 20 July 2017 (attached as Appendix 1). LTC also received confirmation that all conditions and recommendations from the event had been successfully met.

Resource Implications

Cost and time involved in supporting the approval process will be covered by the validation fees charged to South Essex College. Ongoing costs (mainly fixed costs: staff time) in managing and monitoring the partnership and supporting academic and support staff at South Essex College.

Risk Implications

Risks identified as part of the Institutional Approval process.

Equality and Diversity

There are no equality and diversity implications.

Further Information

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Attachments

Appendix 1 – South Essex College Institutional Approval Report

University of East Anglia

**Report of the Institutional Approval of
South Essex College
20 July 2017**

1.   Introduction and Background

1.1   An institutional review Panel met at the Luker Road, Southend campus of South Essex College on 20 July 2017 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 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 the senior leadership team (SLT), academic and administrative staff and students.

1.3   Discussions were informed by the Initial Review produced by the Partnerships Office, and the Partnership Proposal produced by the College. A range of supporting documentation had been considered including copies of policies and procedures, External Examiner reports, programme reviews, and the submission and output reports from the May 2016 QAA Higher Education Review and the Annual Provider Review process.

2.   Tour of Facilities

2.1   Prior to the Institutional Approval Event, the Panel Chair and members of the Partnerships Office visited South Essex College on 3 February 2017. Colleagues from South Essex College met with senior academic and administrative staff at UEA on 22 May 2017.

2.2   During the event the Panel received a tour of the dedicated Higher Education facilities at The Forum including teaching spaces, student study spaces, learning resources and IT facilities. The Panel also received a brief tour of the general facilities available to all students at the Luker Road campus.

2.2   UEA Library's Head of User Services was provided with a tour of the College's Learning Resources Centre and facilities on 26 July 2017 and met with the Learning Resources Manager to discuss current learning resources and future plans. 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 (attached as Appendix D).

Condition 2: Receipt of a satisfactory report from the learning resources visit by the UEA Library Head of User Services on Wednesday 26 July 2017.

3.   Summary of Discussions

Plans for the Growth in Student Numbers

3.1   The Panel were interested in the plans for and the feasibility of the proposed student recruitment targets increasing from 724 to 1402 by 2023. The Principal confirmed that although the plans were ambitious, the College had previously been able to

support 1200 HE students. SLT explained that the growth would be allocated across all programmes and so accounted for realistic and achievable recruitment across the whole of the HE provision without impacting on one subject area. It was also confirmed that the spend and resources required to support this growth, although directly related to an increase in income, was planned and would be provided in the planning stages to support the growth and not provided as a reaction to the growth. The Panel heard that Programme Leaders would be supported to help increase student numbers with individual marketing plans and would be expected to take an active role in the marketing of their programmes.

3.2   The Panel was also keen to hear how an increase in student numbers would effect the student experience. SLT confirmed that staff contact time for Programme Leaders would be limited to 16 hours (a reduction by 6 hours) from 2017/18. Lecturing staff would have a phased reduction to 18 hours class contact time (a reduction of 6 hours) by 2018/19 to enable staff to continue to provide the current level of support to students. Additional staff would be recruited as appropriate. With respect to the physical learning facilities available to support an increase in student numbers, discussions around growing the College estate were also underway, in order to ensure that all students had adequate access to appropriate resources.

3.3   During discussions with academic and administrative staff, and students, it was evident to the Panel that they were cognisant of the plans to increase student numbers and were confident that current and planned resources would adequately support that growth. Students and staff commented on the benefits of larger teaching groups with respect to the enhancement of the student experience by developing different models of delivery and enabling students to share to a wider range of experience in teaching sessions. Projects around teaching and learning delivery for a wider range of student needs were currently in development.

3.4   Staff stated that the new organisational structure for the delivery and management of HE had been developed to take account of the planned student number growth and that this would continue to be implemented and developed further as necessary.
Commendation 4: The ambitious plans for the growth in student numbers and the planned resources available to support that growth.

Governance, Management and Institutional Oversight

3.5   The Panel noted that one of the issues raised in the QAA Higher Education Review in May 2016 was around institutional oversight of HE provision, and of recruitment and retention in particular. The Panel was interested to hear how action taken in response to the QAA Review had progressed. The Principal explained that HE matters were now reported to Governors separately to FE and that Governing Board meetings included a specific HE agenda for the consideration of reports relating to quality, recruitment, retention, growth and resource implications. A dedicated HE Link Governor had been appointed to meet with the HE team and students and formally reported back to the Board.

3.6   The new organisational structure for the delivery and management of HE was designed to ensure effective oversight and management and this included staff within support services with assigned HE portfolios, overseen by the Dean of Higher Education.

3.7   Further developments relating to the HE structure at the College would be implemented from 2017/18 including:

- Programme Leader responsibilities to include the student experience;
- the majority of staff teaching portfolio would be HE with small amounts of Level 3 teaching;
- reconstitution of the Higher Education Committee;
- establishment of a Programme Leaders Forum;

- the introduction of Module Boards to help monitor retention and inform programme design and delivery.

Condition 3: Provide the HE retention figures, by course, for the last three academic years.

Employability

3.8 The Panel noted the College's plans to develop and increase student work-related opportunities and employability skills, and improving students' prospects of gaining graduate employment, as set out in the HE Enhancement and Continuous Improvement Strategy. Developments to support the cultivation and enhancement of relationships with employers included the establishment of a Senate Steering Practice Group and the creation of the Practice Learning Coordinator and Workplace Coordinator Posts.

3.9 The Panel heard a number of examples of good practice around the development of employer input into programme design and delivery and opportunities for students to engage in work-based opportunities from teaching staff, and students confirmed that they were provided with effective support for finding work-based opportunities and placements.

Student Engagement

3.10 The Panel asked College staff how the strategy around student engagement and student representation was being developed. Staff stated that there were a number of formal mechanisms to enable students to provide feedback but that they were encouraged to continuously provide feedback through informal mechanisms. The students who met with the Panel stated that the College was very responsive to informal student feedback and gave examples of where action had been taken in response to that feedback. Students explained the range of formal opportunities for providing feedback e.g. Programme Board, module review and providing feedback to student representatives, however, they were not always clear what happened to feedback provided via formal mechanisms and how the resultant action taken was cascaded to the wider student body.

3.11 SLT 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 Student Liaison post to work alongside the Student Union to gain views from the wider student body and inform developments at the College. SLT 'Question Times' had also been introduced and had proved to be successful in gaining feedback and providing students with clear actions taken in response.

3.12 The College would be using questions from the National Student Survey (NSS) to gather feedback from students at all HE Levels at appropriate points in the academic year to gain useful feedback and to prepare students for undertaking the NSS in their final year.

3.13 The idea of students as Co-creators was being embedded through programme design and review and the College was continuing to look at a range of activities to engage the students and create an HE identity. At institutional level a number of Board and Committee Terms of Reference had been amended to enable the student voice to be heard more effectively, but the College confirmed that there was further room for development that area.

Recommendation 1: Continue and further develop the student representation processes to engage a wider range of students, and to ensure student engagement with all levels of the institution, including the Senior Leadership Team, in line with the HE Student Support Strategy.

Staff Development and Support for Students

3.14 The Panel was interested to learn how College staff were supported in their continuing professional development. Staff confirmed that they felt very supported in

their own development and the ways in which they could develop to enhance the student learning experience. Advanced Practitioner and Learning Technologists at the College were able to support development in teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice and enhancement in teaching and learning was progressed through Programme Boards.

3.15 Staff engaged in the peer review system which was designed to be developmental and was considered to be a positive experience which didn't grade staff but provided feedback linked to the appraisal system to help support and develop staff.

3.16 The College had its own Staff Development Department and all staff were provided with five days to be used for scholarly activity plus an additional five days which could used to engage in a range of activities such as attendance a conferences and external examining. Staff confirmed that the College tried to be as flexible and supportive as possible, within financial restraints, to allow staff to engage in developmental opportunities, and that there were also a number of areas where staff were provided with mandatory training.

3.17 Support provided by the Student Services Centre was considered excellent for staff to be able to get support for working with students with a wide range of academic and pastoral needs.

3.18 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 showed that the College was successfully achieving this aim, through high levels of contact time and excellent academic and pastoral support. This strong, supportive relationship was complemented by a high level of staff expertise, services available through the Student Support Centre, Learning Resources Centre staff and services, and the peer-mentoring scheme.
Commendation 1: The learning support available to the students from the learning resources team, course teams and student services, as evidenced by the students.
Facilities

3.19 During their meeting with the Panel, students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the facilities at The Forum and at the Luker Road campus.

3.20 The students stated that the Learning Resources support was very good and that staff in the Learning Resources Centre were always available to provide support in using the library and online journal access.
Commendation 2: The HE resources available to the students at The Forum.

Engagement with Quality Assurance

3.21 During the Panel's discussion with all staff it was evident that there was widespread knowledge of, and participation in, quality assurance and enhancement systems and processes, both developed by the College and external to the College, and specifically those falling within the QAA baseline regulatory requirements.
Commendation 3: The widespread knowledge of the QAA baseline regulatory requirements by the staff present at the Institutional Approval event.

College Strategy and Proposed Collaboration with UEA

3.22 Through the documentation provided to the Panel in advance and following the meetings prior to the Institutional Approval event the Panel understood the College's rationale for seeking to change validating partners. The information provided by the College in their original partnership proposal had been developed since its submission in May 2017 to include additional course proposals, which required clarification.

3.23 With respect to what the College were expecting from any future validation relationship, the Panel heard from staff that there were a number of opportunities that they would consider exploring including, for example, development of the careers

partnership currently in place, sharing teaching facilities, shared staff development and teaching and learning initiatives and opportunities for scholarly activity.

3.24　The Panel noted the College's current financial position and the action being taken in response to this, including the provision of an action plan to the Skills Funding Agency.

3.25　The Panel also noted that following successful institutional approval there would be a number of actions to be taken between the College and UEA Partnerships Office to ensure the effective transition from one validating partner to another

Condition 1: Sign off of the financial recovery action plan by the UEA Director of Finance, Planning and Governance.

Condition 3: Develop an action plan for implementation of UEA approved regulations, policies and procedures and transfer of students to UEA awards from September 2018.

Condition 5: Clarify the programmes (current and new) proposed for UEA validation, including any current or planned links to apprenticeships, and including current student numbers and projected student number growth.

4.　Summary of Conclusions

4.1　The Institutional Approval Panel recommends to the Senate of the University of East Anglia that South Essex College be approved as a partner institution of the University, subject to the following conditions and recommendations. The action plan for meeting these is included in Appendix C.

4.2　Conditions:

4.2.1　Sign off of the financial recovery action plan by the UEA Director of Finance, Planning and Governance.

4.2.2.　Receipt of a satisfactory report from the learning resources visit by the UEA Library Head of User Services on Wednesday 26 July 2017.

4.2.3.　Develop an action plan for implementation of UEA approved regulations, policies and procedures and transfer of students to UEA awards from September 2018.

4.2.4.　Provide the HE retention figures, by course, for the last three academic years.

4.2.5.　Clarify the programmes (current and new) proposed for UEA validation, including any current or planned links to apprenticeships, and including current student numbers and projected student number growth.

4.3　Recommendations:

4.3.1.　Continue and further develop the student representation processes to engage a wider range of students, and to ensure student engagement with all levels of the institution, including the Senior Leadership Team, in line with the HE Student Support Strategy.

4.4　Commendations

The review Panel commended the College on:

4.4.1　The learning support available to the students from the learning resources team, course teams and student services, as evidenced by the students.

4.4.2　The HE resources available to the students at The Forum.

4.4.3　The widespread knowledge of the QAA baseline regulatory requirements by the staff present at the Institutional Approval event.

4.4.4　The ambitious plans for the growth in student numbers and the planned resources available to support that growth.

4.5　Deadline for Responses to Conditions and Recommendations

Responses to the conditions and recommendations should be submitted to the Institutional Approval Panel Secretary, for consideration by the Panel Chair by 8 September 2017.

Panel Membership

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

Professor Mark Stone, Head of UK Partnerships, Plymouth University (External Panel Member)

Dr Clive Matthews, Academic Director of Taught Programmes, UEA

Dr Louise Bohn, Head of Partnerships, UEA

Ms Isabllea Barrand, FdA Counselling, South Essex College (Student Representative)

Mr Gavin Tash, Senior Partnerships Manager, UEA

Mrs Hannah Jackson, Partnerships Manager, UEA (Secretary)

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

Senior Staff

Angela O'Donoghue, Principal

Anthony McGarel, Deputy Principal

Steve Smith, Vice-Principal, Corporate Resources

Colin Bladen-Kopacz, Dean of Higher Education

Nabeel Zaidi, Interim Head of Higher Education Development and Delivery

Peter Wynarcyk, Higher Education Consultant

Academic and Administrative Staff

Maria Cruickshank, Programme Leader, Early Years

Fraser Dcosta, Higher Education Information Manager

Simon Deakin, Head of Department, Sport and Public Services

Tracy Espinoa, Student Services Manager

Stella Harcourt, Advanced Practitioner, Teaching and Learning

Anna-Lise Harding, Learning Resources Manager

Tracy Maule, Student Manager, Department of Health and Science

Jon Morrison, Programme Leader, Sports Studies

Christopher Norman, Programme Leader, Special Educational Needs

Pablo Paulo, Undergraduate Recruitment Administrator

Grace Stickland, Undergraduate Support Advisor

Sue Windham, Programme Leader, Psychology and Sociology

Students Involved in Discussions with the Panel:

Richard Penn, BA (Hons) Early Years Education, Year 1

Jessica Turner, BA (Hons) Special Education Studies, Year 3

Claire Lethbridge, FdA Counselling, Year 2

Sarah Ward, BA (Hons) Counselling, Year 3

Karyn Clarke, BSc (Hons) Psychology and Sociology Year 2

Institutional Approval Outcomes Action Plan
South Essex College
20 July 2017

The Institutional Approval Panel resolved to recommend to the Senate of the University of East Anglia that South Essex College be approved as a partner institution of the University subject to the following conditions and recommendations:

Outcomes				College Response
Type*	*No*	*Details*	*Deadline*	
CON	1.	*Sign off of the financial recovery action plan by the UEA Director of Finance, Planning and Governance.*	*8 September 2017*	*Financial recovery plan signed off by UEA Director of Finance, Planning and Governance on 5 September 2017*
CON	2.	*Receipt of a satisfactory report from the learning resources visit by the UEA Library Head of User Services on Wednesday 26 July 2017.*	*8 September 2017*	*Report attached as Appendix D*
CON	3.	Develop an action plan for implementation of UEA approved regulations, policies and procedures and transfer of students to UEA awards from September 2018.	*8 September 2017*	*Action Plan submitted by South Essex College on 24 August 2017*
CON	4.	Provide the HE retention figures, by course, for the last three academic years.	*8 September 2017*	*Retention figures submitted by South Essex College on 24 August 2017*
CON	5.	Clarify the programmes (current and new) proposed for UEA validation, including any current or planned links to apprenticeships, and including current student numbers and projected student number growth.	*8 September 2017*	*Programmes proposed for UEA validation submitted on 24 August 2017*
REC	1.	Continue and further develop the student representation processes to engage a wider range of	*Respond by 8 September*	*The College is implementing the following actions in relation to this:*

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

		students, and to ensure student engagement with all levels of the institution, including the Senior Leadership Team, in line with the HE Student Support Strategy.	*2017*	• *to respond to feedback from the QAA HER partial re-review report relating to Expectation B5* • *to critically review arrangements for the 'Student Voice', responding to the outcomes for the section on 'Student Voice' (e.g. overall and questions 23-26) in the NSS 2017* • *to fully implement actions 2, 5, 8 and 15 of the SEC-HEFCE action plan (June 2017)* • *a monthly HE Student Voice meeting with the Dean of HE and relevant members of the HE Quality Team* • *re-align programme board documentation to 2017 NSS questions (to replace the 2016 NSS questions) across the student cycle for the academic year (complement viewing students as 'participants', 'evaluators', 'partners' and 'co-creators')* • *targeted themed meetings (conducted by senior members of the HE Quality Team) with students on programmes where NSS issues are present in order to respond promptly to the issues and across each year group, prioritising year 3 first (and by November 2017)*

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

South Essex College – Review of Learning Resources

Visit to South Essex College Southend Campus 26th July 2017

I met with the following staff involved in delivering and supporting HE courses at South Essex College;

Anne-Lise Harding   Learning Resources Manager

Lyshi Soloman   Learning Technology Manager

Nabeel Zaidi   Interim Head of HE Development & Delivery

Colin Bladen-Kopacz   Dean of HE

Frazer D'Costa   HE Information Manager

South Essex College delivers HE courses at its sites at Southend & Thurrock, but this visit only covered the Southend campus as this is where any HE courses accredited by UEA would be delivered.

HE students at South Essex College have the benefit of a well-equipped Learning Resources Centre in the main College building with access to appropriate physical and electronic resources, together with;

- WiFI & Eduroam
- 82 Open access PCs in the LRC
- Facilities for printing and photocopying
- 86 Individual study spaces
- Learning Resource staff available throughout the LRC opening hours
- Induction & training sessions for staff & students

The HE students also have the benefit of the facilities at the adjacent Forum building which is shared with the local council and University of Essex. South Essex College has dedicated facilities on the 3rd floor of this building which include 125 study spaces and 88 open access PCs. HE students can borrow any of the stock at the Forum, which currently has around 27500 catalogued items to supplement the 11000 items held in the LRC. There are currently no dedicated group study spaces available to HE students and this is something the college will look into providing in the future.

I spent some time with Anne-Lise, the Learning Resources Manager, who is a professionally qualified librarian and an active member of the Academic & Research Libraries Group of Cilip (Chartered Institute for Library & Information Professionals). Anne-Lise was able to provide a range of statistical and management information (see attached document) demonstrating that she has a good understanding of how the resources available in the LRCs are being used. She is actively working to expand and develop the services. Recent improvements include the provision of a discovery search layer and federated searching of many of the e-resource packages making searching of this material more intuitive and easy for HE students both on and off campus.

The Forum building is jointly owned & managed by the council, university and college and so continued use of the HE space at the Forum should not be a problem. However, Anne-Lise is aware that there will be considerable work involved in identifying & re-acquiring those resources held at the Forum that are currently 'owned' by University of Essex, which will no longer be available for SEC HE students to borrow when that accreditation agreement ends. The college management have earmarked 3% of the HE generated income to put towards providing additional resources to bridge this gap and also grow resources to support growth in student numbers.

The college benefits from access to Eduroam and good WiFi coverage both in the college building

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<u>Req (Requirement)</u> - must be completed by given deadline

<u>Rec (Recommendation)</u> – must be responded to by given deadline

and in the Forum. Learning technologists are available to provide help and support for staff and students using their own mobile devices to access college facilities and to help academics become more confident in using technology. The college has invested in Canvas, a new VLE for Higher Education at the college, which will be phased in by Xmas 2017.

Recommendations

- The College consider ways of providing group study facilities, preferably bookable, for their HE students, to ensure students have easy access to facilities suitable for collaborative and group working when required.

- Priority is given to analysing stock usage figures from the Forum to help identify those key resources that will need to be provided to ensure students continue to have borrowing access to the resources they require to support their studies.

- The College explore ways of raising awareness of, and signposting students to, additional resources that may be available for reference purposes, for example in specialist libraries in Central London.

- The College explore different feedback mechanism and ways of encouraging student engagement and use that information to ensure it is responsive to the student voice and able to address issues that may help improve the NSS scores.

Heather Wells, Head of User Services,
University of East Anglia Library
31st July 2017

* 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