LTC14D080

Title:	**Report of the Institutional Review of Easton&Otley College**
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Report of the Institutional Review of Easton&Otley College

Issue

Attached at Appendix 1 is the report of the Institutional Review of Easton&Otley College which took place on 15 October 2014.

Recommendation

The Learning and Teaching Committee is invited to recommend to the Senate of the University of East Anglia that Easton&Otley College be re-approved as a partner institution of the University for a period of up to five years commencing October 2014.

Resource Implications

Not applicable.

Equality and Diversity

Not applicable.

Further Information

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Attachments

Appendix 1- Easton&Otley Institutional Review Outcome Report

University of East Anglia

Report of the Institutional Review of Easton&Otley College
15 October 2014

1.   Introduction and Background

1.1   An institutional review panel met at Easton&Otley College (Otley Campus) (EOC) on 15 October 2014 to consider the re-approval of EOC as a partner institution of the University of East Anglia (UEA). Membership of the Institutional Review panel is shown in Appendix A.

1.2   The panel met with a range of EOC staff and a group of students from a broad range of programmes at EOC (as listed in Appendix B). Separate meetings took place with academic and administrative staff from the college, and with students.

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

2.   Summary of Discussions

Tour of Facilities

2.1.   The panel was provided with a tour of facilities at the Otley campus including teaching rooms, science laboratories, the library, student study area and the animal unit.

2.2.   A virtual tour of the Easton Campus was provided to the panel via a video presentation. This included student accommodation, teaching facilities, the dairy unit and the animal unit.

Higher Education Strategy

2.3.   The panel discussed the College's Higher Education (HE) strategy and the recent transfer of validation of Higher Education programmes at the Otley campus from University Campus Suffolk (UCS) to the UEA. Staff informed the panel that the move was viewed positively and strengthened the existing close working relationship between the Easton campus and the UEA and developed the relationship between the UEA and the Otley campus which was already well established through UCS.

2.4.   The panel heard that the College had identified agriculture as a major area to develop and discussions were currently taking place between the College and UEA regarding the development of new programmes in this area. The Centre for Contemporary Agriculture, a collaboration between the UEA and Easton & Otley College supported by partner institutes including the John Innes Centre, the Institute of Food Research, The Sainsbury Laboratory in Norwich, University Campus Suffolk and the National Institute for Agricultural Botany & The Arable Group (NIAB-TAG), was likely to be a key feature in these developments.

2.5.   Staff acknowledged that the College's Higher Education Strategy had been superseded by recent developments, most notably the change in validating body for provision at the Otley campus and developments following the merger of the two colleges, and was in need of updating.

Condition: The HE strategy must be updated to ensure that it reflects the recent relationship with UEA.

Student Induction

2.6.   The student induction process was explored with the students who reported a mixed experience. Many of the third year "top-up" students found that their induction was run jointly with first years and as a result, not all the topics covered were relevant. Year two students told the panel that their induction programme had taken place in a single morning, followed immediately with lectures. There was a general feeling that the induction process had felt more like an enrolment event and that further consideration could be given to extra-curricular activities and development of relevant sessions throughout the induction process.

2.7.   Staff informed the panel that a number of events had taken place during induction including a visit to the UEA Library and an introduction to e-resources available to students which had been well received by students.

Requirement: The College to put in place a strategy focussed on enhancing the quality, timeliness and value of induction for all students.

Assessment and Feedback

2.8.   Feedback provided to students was discussed with staff and students. Students informed the panel that although the quality of the feedback was generally very good, delays had been experienced in receiving feedback which in some cases had led to a second assignment being submitted without having received feedback on the first.

2.9.   Students confirmed that a deadline by which feedback should be received was issued with the assignment briefs but was not always adhered to. The briefs themselves were clear and learning outcomes were provided. Students were able to discuss any issues they had with assignments with their module leaders or programme leaders.

2.10.   Staff informed the panel that assessment and feedback was a key theme of the annual review processes at both campuses and had been identified in the NSS results as an area requiring improvement.

2.11.   Recent comments from external examiners on assessment and feedback had been positive, highlighting the positive move from hand written to typed comments, the introduction of a standardised feedback form and the supportive comments directing students in areas they could develop to improve their marks.

2.12.   Students and staff informed the panel that a range of assessment methods were used including examinations, written coursework, projects and presentations. A

group debate had recently been introduced to one of the programmes which had been received positively by the students.

2.13. The panel were informed that 'turnitin' was used on all electronically submitted work to aid in the detection of plagiarism. Students were also educated on plagiarism and how to avoid it as part of the academic skills modules run during the first year of study. CPD was available to staff on the use of 'turnitin' and students received a tutorial on how to interpret the 'turnitin' output report.

Requirement: The College to put in place robust systems that ensure close monitoring of timeliness of feedback.

Higher Education Ethos

2.14. The panel was keen to explore with students their experiences of studying Higher Education in a largely Further Education (FE) environment. Students informed the panel that they had not noticed a significant difference between FE and HE study at the College.

2.15. One area where students had noticed a difference was the move to independent learning, particularly at level six. The students informed the panel that lecturers supported them in their studies and helped to identify suitable journals and texts for further research. The panel was informed by the students that most lecturers were very knowledgeable in their subject areas and were able to draw on their own research activity.

2.16. Some students informed the panel that they had recently attended an event at the UEA and had been impressed by the lecture theatre and facilities there. Students were also impressed by the range of student union activities including sporting events. Students felt that they would benefit from a student's union at the College and that this would be one way of enhancing the identity of HE students at the College.

Recommendation: The College to explore ways of communicating and celebrating the distinctive identity and ethos of its Higher Education provision and the distinctive nature of Higher Education learning.

Staff Development and the Promotion of Scholarly Activity

2.17. The panel was interested in staff development opportunities at the College and the potential for staff to undertake scholarly activity. The panel heard that a core HE teaching team had been created and that HE staff had been given 140 hours of protected time for research and scholarly activity. Much of the research conducted in this time had been shared amongst colleagues which allowed sharing of best practice.

2.18. Staff informed the panel that they felt very well supported and many had been encouraged to enrol on Master's level programmes. Two lecturers were studying on the MA Higher Education Practice at the UEA which all new UEA lecturers were required to study. This had the added benefit of networking with UEA academics and further strengthening the relationship between the College and UEA. The

College were also exploring ways for staff to achieve Higher Education Academy Fellowship status through a variety of routes.

2.19. Senior management staff informed the panel that they recognised that the success of the College was due to the staff and that sufficient time needed to be allowed for development. They assured the panel that long term support had been given to the protected time lecturers currently had.

Commendation: Support provided to academic staff for research and scholarly activity and the development of an HE ethos and development of a core HE team.

Virtual Learning Environment

2.20. The panel explored use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), Moodle, with students and was told that there was much variation across modules. Many of the module sites were being used as file repositories rather than fully utilising the interactive elements that Moodle had to offer.

2.21. It was also reported by students that there was a lack of communication over what was available on the VLE, although it was noted that Moodle was new to both students and staff at the Otley campus, where Blackboard had previous been used as the VLE.

2.22. Lecturing staff at the College informed the panel that they had received positive feedback from year one students who were using the VLE for the first time. Staff were using a variety of tools including wikis, interactive quizzes and forums. A discussion board was also being used to advertise job vacancies. One lecturer had adopted a flipped lecture approach, making material available to students before the contact sessions so that more interactive discussions could then take place.

2.23. It was acknowledged that there was potential to increase the use of the interactive features of the VLE and staff were undertaking training and sharing best practice in this area.

Recommendation: The College to consider ways of supporting staff and students to make more effective and creative use of the VLE.

Peer Assisted Learning

2.24. The panel explored the support available to students and the monitoring systems in place at the College. Staff informed the panel that retention data was considered on a three-weekly basis and that a traffic light system was in place to identify any students at risk so that additional support could be put in place.

2.25. The panel also heard that staff were looking at ways of having first and second year students working on project developed by third year students to increase interaction between the different years of study.

2.26. Staff informed the panel that Peer Assisted Learning had been introduced at the Otley campus and had been well received by students. The scheme was due to be expanded to the Easton campus and this was encouraged by the panel.

Recommendation: The College to consider rolling out Peer Assisted Learning across both campuses.

Employer Engagement and Work-based Learning

2.27. The panel asked students about their experiences of work-based learning. The panel heard that students were responsible for finding their own placements but that support was available from staff at the College. Staff confirmed that a named contact was in place at each campus to help students with any placements issues.

2.28. Staff informed the panel that communication channels were established early with placement providers and that all relevant health and safety and suitability checks were performed. Placement providers were contacted regularly to ensure that any potential issues could be raised and discussed as soon as possible.

2.29. The panel heard that a database had been established to record the opportunities available at each placement. This database system was also being used to record any concerns that students might have about placements to better inform future placements.

2.30. The panel was informed that a grant had been awarded for the College to research communication between the College and employers. This would further enhance the mechanisms already in place and it was hoped that a new electronic communication method could be introduced.

2.31. Staff also informed the panel that regular meetings were held with the marketing department to establish and maintain two way communication with employers. This included highlighting to employers what opportunities were available at the college for students to do industry projects.

Commendation: The ongoing work and future plans to develop and build links with employers and create systems which support more consistent work experience opportunities.

Learning Resources

2.32. The panel was interested in the learning resources available to students at the College. Students told the panel that access to core text books was not a problem and although on site access to journals was limited, they were able to access journals and e-resources of the UEA. Students were satisfied with the number of computers available to them and informed the panel that there were also additional spaces with power points for laptops.

2.33. Staff informed the panel that students were introduced to the learning resources in the Academic Skills module at the Easton campus and the Academic and Professional Development module at the Otley campus in semester one. Staff from the Learning Resource Centre and the library also provided introductory sessions as part of the student induction process.

2.34. The panel was told that organised trips were scheduled at the beginning of the programmes to take students to the UEA library and introduce them to the resources available. Staff also made use of the resources available to them via the UEA.

2.35. The panel heard that extra staff resource was now in place in the Learning Resources Centre and that resources were being shared across the two sites. The College had a policy to purchase e-books where possible which more easily facilitated the sharing of resources across sites.

Recommendation: The College explore strategies for ensuring a more consistent level of learning resource provision (including e-learning resources) that reduces current over reliance on UEA provided resources.

Cross Campus Activity

2.36. The panel was keen to explore the interaction between the two campuses of the College. Students informed the panel that they had been told that lecturers from the alternate campus would deliver some lectures but this had not happened.

2.37. Staff informed the panel that communication between sites was good and that the close working relationships had allowed for ideas and resources to be shared. The panel heard that monthly operational meeting were held between both sites via video conference and staff were in contact via e-mail, telephone and in person.

2.38. Staff also informed the panel that shared trips had been organised, last year a trip to Paris had been offered to students at both sites. Some staff also worked across both sites including the HE Support Tutor which provided students access to specialist staff resource they did not previous have access to.

Recommendation: Continue to explore opportunities for cross campus activity.

Development and Monitoring of Academic Programmes

2.39. The panel heard that some modules on the FdSc Animal Science and Welfare programme had already been shared between the two sites and that all modules had been aligned between sites to ensure parity and consistent student experience.

2.40. Both sites complete Self Assessment, Review and Evaluation (SARE) reports on an annual basis to monitor and develop academic programmes. An annual SARE event is held to consider the course level SAREs and feed into a College level SARE. Actions plans are created as part of the SARE documents and these are monitored and progressed throughout the year via regular meetings including the Joint Board of Study (JBOS).

Commendation: The systems in place for developing and monitoring of academic programmes between, and across, the two campuses.

3.   Summary of Conclusions

3.1   The Institutional Review Panel resolved to recommend to the Senate of the University of East Anglia that Easton&Otley College be re-approved as a partner institution of the University for a period of up to five years commencing October 2014 subject to the conditions, requirements and recommendations contained in the action plan included in Appendix C.

4   Commendations

The review panel commended the College on:

4.1.   The support provided to academic staff for research and scholarly activity and the development of an HE ethos and development of a core HE team;

4.2.   The ongoing work and future plans to develop and build links with employers and create systems which support more consistent work experience opportunities;

4.3.   The systems in place for developing and monitoring of academic programmes between, and across, the two campuses.

Panel Membership

Dr Adam Longcroft, Academic Director of Taught Programmes, UEA (Chair)
Dr Stephen Chadd, Dean of the School of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Royal Agricultural University
Dr Helen James, Reader, School of Biological Sciences, UEA
Mrs Heather Wells, Head of User Services, Library, UEA
Mr Gavin Tash, Senior Partnerships Manager, UEA
Mr Clive Bound, Vice Principal, Easton&Otley College
Ms Nicola Carter, Student Representative, BSc (Hons) Wildlife Management and Conservation (Year 3), Easton&Otley College (Otley Campus)
Ms Jaye Williams, Student Representative, BSc (Hons) Equitation and Coaching (Year 2), Easton&Otley College (Easton Campus)
Mr Stephen Knock, Partnerships Manager, UEA (Secretary)

Members of EOC Staff Involved in Discussions with the Panel

Lecturing Staff

Denise Gibson	Course Leader Animal Science & Welfare	Otley
Kevin Wallace	Course Leader Wildlife Management & Conservation FdSc and BSc	Otley
Kevin Grout	Module Leader Fishery Management & Sustainable Aquaculture	Otley & Easton
Katie Wilden	Lecturer and module leader Animal Science and Welfare	Otley
Tegan Locke	Course leader for ITT	Otley
Russell Board	Lecturer in Sport	Easton
Colin Drane	Lecturer in Ecology	Easton
Jane Freeman	Lecturer in Sport	Easton
Pascale Harvey	Lecturer in various modules	Easton
Karen King	Lecturer in Equine	Easton
Becci Marchand	Lecturer in Animal Science and Welfare	Easton
Jerry Kinsley	Lecturer in Ecology	Easton
James Trounce	Lecturer in Agriculture	Easton
Tony Wilson	Programme Area Leader in Agriculture and CCA	Easton
Emma Claridge	Programme Area Leader in Equitation & Coaching and Sport	Easton

Managers and Support Staff

Denis McAuley	Head of HE	Otley & Easton
Tegan Locke	Programme Area Leader Higher Education	Otley
Chrissie McLean	HE Support Tutor	Otley & Easton
Kim Rabett	HE Administrator	Otley
Jonathan Bunn	IT Manager	Easton
Christina Sadler	Interim Principal	Easton & Otley
Phil Thirkettle	Governing Body	Easton & Otley
Melvin Bottomley	Head of Capital Projects	Easton & Otley
Anna Bennett	Programme Area Leader in Animal Science & Welfare	Easton
Emma Claridge	Programme Area Leader in Equitation & Coaching and Sport	Easton
Tony Wilson	Programme Area Leader in Agriculture and CCA	Easton
Simon Chlopas	Learning Resources Manager	Easton
Maureen Bound	HE Administrator	Easton

Students Involved in Discussions with the Panel

Jorge Serra	BSc Wildlife Management and Conservation (top-up)	Otley
Alex Jones	BSc Wildlife Management and Conservation (top-up)	Otley
Dominik Wojcik	FdSc Wildlife Management and Conservation year 1	Otley
Fergus Davies	FdSc Wildlife Management and Conservation year 1	Otley
Mary Clark	FdA Landscape and Garden Design year 1	Otley
Matthew Bloss	FdSc Animal Science and Welfare year 1	Easton
Georgia Cosham	FdSc Animal Science and Welfare year 1	Easton
Beth Deadman	FdSc Agriculture year 2	Easton
Toby Wright	FdSc Agriculture year 2	Easton
Aiden Holden	FdSc Ecology and Conservation Management year 1	Easton
Chris Lambert	FdSc Sports Coaching year 1	Easton
Freya Le Serve	FdSc Sports Coaching year 1	Easton
Liam McDonald	FdSc Sports Coaching year 2	Easton
Alfie Smith	FdSc Sports Coaching year 2	Easton

Institutional Review Outcomes Action Plan
Easton&Otley College
15 October 2014

The Institutional Review Panel resolved to recommend to the Senate of the University of East Anglia that Easton&Otley College (EOC) be re-approved as a partner institution of the University for a period of up to five years commencing October 2014 subject to the following requirements and recommendations.

Outcomes				College Response
Type	**No**	**Details**	**Deadline**	
Con	1	The HE strategy must be updated to ensure that it reflects the recent relationship with UEA.	Autumn JBOS. 12 November 2014	
Req	1	The College to put in place a strategy focussed on enhancing the quality, timeliness and value of induction for all students.	Spring JBOS. 25 February 2015	
Req	2	The College to put in place robust systems that ensure close monitoring of timeliness of feedback. A report should be presented to the Summer JBOS meeting.	Summer JBOS. 10 June 2015	

Rec	1	The College to explore ways of communicating and celebrating the distinctive identity and ethos of its HE provision and the distinctive nature of HE learning.	Spring JBOS. 25 February 2015	
Rec	2	The College to consider ways of supporting staff and students to make more effective and creative use of the VLE.	Spring JBOS.25 February 2015	
Rec	3	The College to consider rolling out Peer Assisted Learning across both campuses.	Spring JBOS.25 February 2015	
Rec	4	The College to explore strategies for ensuring a more consistent level of learning resource provision (including e-learning resources) that reduces current over reliance on UEA provided resources.	Spring JBOS.25 February 2015	
Rec	5	Continue to explore opportunities for cross campus activity.	Spring JBOS.25 February 2015	