



## Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of UCFB College of Football Business Limited, June 2018

### 1 Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that UCFB College of Football Business Limited (the College) is making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, evaluate and enhance its higher education provision since the [previous monitoring visit](#) in June 2017.

### 2 Changes since the last QAA review visit

2 The College offers courses validated by Buckinghamshire New University (BNU) at the Wembley and Etihad campuses. Many of the Level 6 BA (Hons) courses now include a Foundation Year at Level 0 which attracted 84 students in September 2017. Student numbers have increased by 31 per cent with growth at both sites. There are 677 students at Etihad and 1,054 at Wembley, including 28 postgraduate students.

3 Three new courses have been developed and approved to start in September 2018: BA (Hons) Football Coaching and Talent Management, MSc Football Coaching and Analysis and MSc International Sports Management (online). In March 2018, the Department for Education accepted an application from the College to use the word 'university' in the company name, 'University Campus of Football Business'.

4 Academic staff numbers have increased by 40 per cent and a new Student Hub has been established at Wembley bringing student services, the library and pastoral, tutorial, teaching and meeting rooms together in one place.

5 The significant growth in student recruitment and the expansion of physical and human resources led to the monitoring visit being extended to enable further exploration of evidence than would be possible in a standard monitoring visit.

### 3 Findings from the monitoring visit

6 The College is making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision. The monitoring visit and evidence provided confirm the College has fully implemented all actions arising from the 2015 Higher Education Review (Plus) recommendations. Significant improvements have been made in the College's management of its higher education provision, including governance and the overall student experience.

7 The College maintains the good practice of providing extensive support for students during the application process and throughout their period of study. It has introduced new strategies and policies such as the Employability and Enrichment Strategy, the Student Involvement Policy and other engagement initiatives. Students value the range of opportunities provided and benefit from the variety of high-profile guest speakers supporting the breadth of sports-related programmes.

8 The College continuously reviews and updates its academic regulations and governance with the Academic Board now reporting to the recently formed Governing Body. It continues to actively participate in the BNU/UCFB Strategic Board and the Operations Board which meet regularly. The Academic Board also meets in a consistent and well-structured way. Minutes of committee meetings demonstrate sustained and systematic monitoring of progress against actions. Quality improvements include action planning that monitors internal quality processes, professional development of academic staff and cross-campus departmental meetings. Academic governance is highly effective and reflects the College's commitment to improving the quality of students' learning opportunities. Detailed action plans for each programme area (including the new Foundation, Level 0 programme) indicate that enhancements are already being planned, are subject to progress monitoring at regular intervals and are well-embedded to support enhanced delivery.

9 The Governing Body and Board of Directors determine future direction, approve and monitor progress against strategic plans, and consider the Academic Development Plan and any updates. These plans provide broad targets for growth and facilitate enhanced planning and monitoring, enabling the College to systematically review information at a strategic level. Financial projections show consideration of future student number planning aligned to the Strategic Plan and are also discussed at the BNU Partnership Board. Academic departments use these high-level plans to plan and develop new programmes. Plans are live documents and are updated following Executive Management Committee (EMC) meetings.

10 The College has strengthened the Quality Department which includes a Quality and Registry Manager, Registrar, Quality Officer and a recently appointed Teaching and Learning Lead, who all report to the Head of Quality. As members of committees and boards, and through attendance at academic weekly briefings, Quality Department staff provide consistency and assurance that policies and procedures are followed.

11 The College provides regular development opportunities for academics, including: sessions to address the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code); requirements covering new programme development; admissions; teaching and learning; standardisation; and academic standards. Effective mechanisms across the College, and within academic departments and programme teams, enable the sharing of good practice across both campuses. New staff are expected to have achieved, or be working towards, a recognised teaching qualification and to gain Fellowship of Advance HE. Existing staff are encouraged to gain such a qualification and Fellowship. All staff are supported through this process. 15 lecturers are currently enrolled on a higher education teaching qualification and the College has a target for all staff achieving such a qualification. Staff have opportunities to develop and maintain research and scholarly activity in line with the Research and Scholarship Strategy. The College is fully supporting five academics who are studying for doctorate or professional doctorate qualifications.

12 The College has recently added a curriculum development role to the Head of Academics (Etihad Campus) to further enhance existing internal programme design and development processes before submission to BNU for programme approval. New programmes only proceed to validation events after robust internal scrutiny panel meetings and meetings with BNU curriculum development teams. The College has developed and successfully implemented an effective approach to curriculum planning, development and validation. Plans include the development and validation of three new MSc programmes to facilitate internal progression opportunities and two BA (Hons) degrees, for recruitment in September 2019.

13 The student recruitment, selection and admission process is based upon BNU requirements with guidelines provided in an operational manual. College staff work closely

with their BNU counterparts throughout the admissions cycle to ensure adherence to principles of fair practice and inclusivity. The College offers open days to prospective students and follows up with communications using social media and direct mail about other activities providing insights into student life. Students report satisfaction with the admissions process and the interactions with College staff while making applications.

14 The College has a structured and fully embedded approach to annual quality monitoring, involving completion of BNU's Subject Annual Monitoring Meeting (SAMM) report. The SAMM report includes targets and actions for quality enhancement and is submitted to BNU's Educational Committee annually. This, together with the College's continuing internal use of detailed individual Programme Review and Evaluation (PRE) reports which draw on student surveys and external examiner feedback, provides institutional oversight. Programme leaders complete PRE reports and these, together with action plans, are followed up by the Programme Management Committee. BNU no longer requires completion of individual PREs but the College has continued to use these detailed reports for internal quality enhancement purposes. BNU recently replaced the SAMM requirement with a Partnership and Monitoring record and action plan (PAM). The College will be using this for the first time for the annual review of the 2017-18 academic year.

15 Student representation at Programme Leader, EMC and BNU/UCFB Operational Board meetings ensures that the student voice is heard through student engagement with quality systems. Students engage with annual quality monitoring processes through membership and attendance at Governing Body and Academic Board meetings. The College has developed a detailed action plan related to outcomes and submission rates for the National Student Survey (NSS). Various committees, including the Governing Body, consider NSS results and progress monitoring. Regularly reviewed, effective and embedded processes are in place to assess, evaluate and enhance academic standards and the student learning experience. The establishment of the new Student Hub has helped to create space to build a student community. Students confirm this is a welcome addition and appreciate that Student Services are now located within the Hub.

16 Student retention data shows continued improvement as a result of close monitoring of student progress and timely support measures by At Risk Panel meetings. 92 per cent of the students enrolled in September 2017 remained on programme, (including five per cent as internal transfers) at the time of the monitoring visit, compared with similar retention rates of 73 and 80 per cent respectively for the September 2015 and 2016 cohorts. This is the first year of delivery for Level 0 students and the current retention rate for this cohort is 98 per cent. Achievement rates for those completing programmes are also improving. The latest cohort for which figures are available is September 2014 with an average achievement of 98 per cent for small cohorts across six courses.

17 The management information system (MIS) has been enhanced and a new MIS support manager has been appointed to implement and maintain the new system to ensure data collection and reporting contribute to the enhancement of the student experience.

#### **4 Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education**

18 Academic staff work with *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and the University to ensure delivery and assessment of programmes are at appropriate levels. BNU approves policies and procedures in use across the College and close working arrangements support effective working practice and provide assurance that expectations are met. This includes a joint Strategic Board and monthly Operations Board which ensures transparency, provides support, and confirms academic standards and adherence to regulations.

19 The Academic Board is responsible for ensuring adherence of College regulations and procedures to the Quality Code. Staff receive developmental sessions on the Quality Code at the start of year and it is included in academic induction for new staff members. Any updates are discussed at EMC and then distributed to all staff. It is also embedded within curriculum development documentation.

20 Following a successful visit by The British Psychological Society in April 2018, the Society confirmed re-accreditation for three years from 2017-18 for the BSc (Hons) Sport Psychology course.

## **5 Background to the monitoring visit**

21 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

22 The monitoring visit was carried out by Professor Donald Pennington, Reviewer, and Dr Suzanne Richardson, Coordinator, on 26-27 June 2018.

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