

Review of UK transnational education in the Republic of Ireland

Case study: University of East London and Chevron Training and Recruitment Ltd

1 This case study is concerned with the collaborative partnership between the University of East London (the University) and Chevron Training and Recruitment Ltd (Chevron). Through this arrangement, the University is offering an opportunity to students in the Republic of Ireland to study to honour degree level in Early Childhood Studies, building on their related Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 6

5 Details of the programme are set out in a programme specification made available to students through the programme handbook. A recent articulation agreement has been put in place allowing students who have attained a relevant degree (NFQ level 7 award) from seven named institutions in the Republic of Ireland to complete 120 credits at FHEQ level 6 to attain the University's honours degree. All modules are core and are existing University modules from the School of Education and Communities (the School). The programme is a distance, online learning programme, delivered through Chevron's VLE and supported by Chevron staff. The first cohort of students commenced its study in January 2016. At the time that the case study was written there were 124 students on the programme: 79 full-time first years; four full-time second years; and 41 part-time first years.

6 The University's Quality Manual outlines its quality assurance and enhancement processes, including those specific to collaborative partnerships and its responsibilities in relation to quality assurance and enhancement. The University's approach to quality assurance and enhancement are underpinned by a set of underlying principles. The Academic Board is responsible for academic quality in relation to taught programmes and research; many of the operational aspects are delegated to standing committees of the Academic Board. The University's committee structure is set out in the Quality Manual. The University also has a comprehensive Quality Assurance Handbook for Collaborations, which contains information about the operation of its partnerships.

7 Definitions of the University's collaborative arrangements are set out in its Quality Manual and include franchise, joint, validated, autonomous franchise, distance learning, distributed delivery, double award and articulation arrangements. The University retains ultimate responsibility for the standards and quality of all programmes offered through collaborative arrangements. The language of instruction for programmes offered through the University's partners is normally English although there are some exceptions. Franchise arrangements are typically utilised for international collaborations and operate under the University's Academic Framework, Assessment and Feedback Policy, and Skills Curriculum. Proposals for collaborations undergo initial approval, institutional approval, the drawing up of a memorandum of cooperation and programme approval; the programme approval process involves a planning meeting and a validation event normally involving a site visit.

8 Following approval by the School, initial approval for the partnership with Chevron was granted by the University's Academic Development Committee in June 2015. Institutional approval followed in October 2015. A validation event took place in November 2015 at Chevron's premises, and as required by the University's procedures the panel for which included external members. The report from the validation event was approved through the University's Validation and Review Subcommittee in December 2015. As part of the University's quality assurance and enhancement procedures additional due diligence information was requested from Chevron the following year. The award meets Republic of Ireland requirements for publication on the Department of Children and Youth Affairs list of approved qualifications.

9 The rights and responsibilities of the University and Chevron are clearly set out in the Memorandum of Cooperation signed by the Vice-Chancellor of the University and Managing Director of Chevron in 2016. The Memorandum of Cooperation, while not time-limited, is reviewed on a three-yearly basis to ensure that it is fit for purpose; a separate appendix containing financial and other information is updated annually. As part of the programme approval event, a mapping from the local, Republic of Ireland qualification was considered, and an articulation agreement was signed alongside the standard Memorandum of Cooperation; this ensures that students enter at the appropriate point in the programme and have achieved the learning outcomes from previous levels. As noted above, a further articulation agreement has recently been put into place allowing students who have attained

made to staffing, Chevron inform the University. The staff student ratio is one to 25

20 The University's collaborative review process set out in its Quality Manual involves review of the partnership and associated programmes on a five-year cycle; the relationship with Chevron being too recent to have undergone this process. A meeting to prepare for the process is held one year in advance of the collaborative review taking place. A partner enhancement meeting is also held at the end of the first year of operation of a new partnership, which discusses progress and considers solutions to any issues that have arisen.

21 The process for Chevron to market