Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) of NYU in London

May 2016

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Key findings

QAA's judgements about NYU in London

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision at NYU in London.

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About NYU in London

New York University (the University) was founded in 1831. A large and distinguished private institution, it describes itself as having a global network, with sites for study and research in 14

Explanation of the findings about NYU in London

This section explains the review findings in more detail.

Terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers have been included in a brief glossary at the end of this report. A fuller glossary of terms is available on the QAA website, and formal definitions of certain terms may be found in the operational description and handbook for the review method, also on the QAA website.

The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of academic partners Summary of findings

1.8 Ultimate responsibility for the setting and maintenance of academic standards rests with New York University as awarding body. The responsibilities delegated to New York University in London (NYUL) are clearly specified and adhered to. They include all aspects of course design and delivery and staff appointments; in all these cases decisions are subject to scrutiny by the University to ensure comparability of standards with programmes taught on-campus or at other overseas centres.

1.9 The review team found NYUL assiduous in managing its delegated responsibilities. It adheres to the requirements of the University, which in turn is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and, where possible, it voluntarily maps its provision against the expectations of Part A of the Quality Code. External scrutiny of assessment lies in the hands of New York University. All evidence seen by the review team indicates that academic standards at NYUL are assiduously maintained.

January 2017 NYUL ensures that all teaching faculty make consistent and effective use of the virtual learning environment as a teaching and learning tool.

2.15 The review team discussed with managers, staff, faculty and students NYUL's effectiveness in developing its students as independent learners and enhancing their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking. On the basis of these discussions and extensive documentary study the team concludes that students are well supported to fulfil their potential as learners. The Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B4): Higher education providers have in place, monitor and evaluate arrangements and resources which enable students to develop their academic, personal and professional potential.

Quality Code, Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement

Findings

2.16 NYUL is committed to providing students with a safe and secure learning and living environment with access to personal and medical services. It reviews staffing needs annually prior to the budget round, and recent years have seen a considerably expanded staffing base. Appointed student officers are also actively engaged in supporting fellow students. Students and their families have access to a Freephone 24/7 helpline staffed on a rota basis, and staff in residences provide a 24/7 response to emergency calls. Reflecting increasing demand for mental health services, NYUL makes additional support available during examination week. Each semester a careers counsellor visits, and panels of locally

Expectation (B5): Higher education providers take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience.

Quality Code, Chapter B5: Student Engagement

Findings

2.21 Some three-quarters of NYUL students study for one semester only, joining to take specific courses approved by the University; the extent to which such students can reasonably be described as partners is therefore circumscribed All courses are evaluated on

Expectation (B6): Higher education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment, including for the recognit ion of prior learning, which enable every student to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the credit or qualification being sought.

Quality Code, Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning

Findings

2.25 NYUL works closely with University academic departments to ensure that standards of assessment are the same as those on all of NYU's degree-awarding campuses. Each home department has a global coordinator, many of whom sit on the London Site Specific Advisory Committee, the minutes of which demonstrate that new academic programmes and the provision of additional assessment in global learning outcomes are given full consideration. Global coordinators are tasked with ensuring consistency of academic standards and that all courses slot into the aggregate of courses making up the degree. All course outlines and syllabi produced or adopted by NYUL teaching staff are either produced collaboratively with the home department or reviewed for equitability by that department. The global coordinator or another departmental representative visits London periodically to meet local faculty, observe teaching and review coursework.

2.26 As noted in paragraph 1.5, locally appointed faculty undertake marking on the basis of induction, detailed training and support; marks are subject to internal monitoring and University approval, and faculty members confirmed the effectiveness of these procedures. The work of students on the exchange agreement with the School of Oriental and African Studies (see paragraph 1.2) is assessed by the School, NYU converting numerical marks to the University's grading system on the basis of an agreed algorithm. Students confirmed their understanding of the assessment criteria and that, in general, feedback is helpful and timely, albeit that they are not aware of any formal requirements in relation to turnaround times.

2.27 Policy and procedures on academic integrity are explained to students at orientation and provided in written form, both as hard copy and online; freshmen are required to undertake an online tutorial explaining academic integrity, standards and practices; and students confirmed their familiarity with the requirements concerned (see also paragraph 1.3). Staff review coursework and essays through plagiarism-detection software; clear procedures are in place for dealing with plagiarism; and NYUL plans to implement a more formal process for recording and tracking academic integrity cases in the future. These arrangements were analysed in detail by the review team and found to be robust and fit for purpose.

2.28 The review team found that NYUL discharges its assessment responsibilities in an effective manner. The Expectation is met and the risk is low.

Expectation: Met
Level of risk: Low

Expectation (B7): Higher education providers make scrupulous use of external examiners.

Quality Code, Chapter B7: External Examining

Findings

2.29 In accordance with University practice, external examiners are not used to scrutinise student assessment. The Expectation is therefore not applicable.

Expectation (B8):

Expectation (B10): Degree-awarding bodies take ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. Arrangements for delivering learning opportunities with organisations other than the degree-awarding body are implemented securely and managed effectively.

Quality Code, Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others

Findings

2.38 NYUL has a longstanding exchange agreement with the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), which enables students from each institution to take courses under the auspices of the other. The review team noted that the agreement is not signed or dated; the University may perhaps wish to formalise this. The agreement offers NYUL students access to five courses in African Studies, which are managed according to SOAS's academic standards, policies and procedures, approved by the University as conforming to its credit requirements, and assessed with the aid of a mark conversion algorithm.

2.39 NYUTL collaborates with the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA; see paragraph 1.2), which teaches a core Performance in Shakespeare course. All arrangements are agreed and confirmed at regular meetings; the NYUTL Director is involved in induction and collaborates in relevant RADA staff appointments; and Tisch School of Performing Arts staff and faculty visit RADA to observe classes and review provision.

2.40 NYUL's partnership arrangement with EUSA, another study-abroad organisation, involves EUSA taking responsibility for internships subject to monitoring by the Office of Global Programs. EUSA staff work closely with Global Programs staff, attending pre-departure meetings to meet students and reporting regularly to the Office of Global Programs and NYUL for quality management and visa monitoring purposes. The review team noted that the University has used this partnership as a model for developing equivalent opportunities to other sites, and identified the effectiveness of the NYU internship programme as good practice (see paragraph 2.18).

2.41 In order to provide appropriate placements for a Human Development course for student teachers, NYUL engages with the Education-Training-Citizenship organisation to organise and manage placements, induct students, hold reflective sessions and report on attendance. NYUL staff meet the relevant coordinator for monitoring purposes and a final debriefing.

2.42 Arrangements to secure appropriate academic standards and widen learning

Expectation (B11): Research degrees are awarded in a research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and th e support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.

Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees

Findings

2.44 NYUL does not supervise research degree students. Therefore, this Expectation is not applicable.

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.45 In reaching its judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

2.46 This section of the report contains thee features of good practice and one recommendation. The former relate to: (i) auditioning and selection procedures for NYUTL students, where the review team noted in particular the meticulous attention paid to investing considerable resources to ensure that a fair and constructive approach is taken to what is for applicants a challenging experience in an intensely competitive situation; (ii) the management of internships, which are carefully designed to complement students' own learning objectives; and (iii) the support, academic and personal, given to students by teaching faculty, NYUL staff, and a range of appointed student officers to ensure that their time in London is, in both these respects, fruitful and enjoyable. The recommendation relates to an inconsistency with which teaching faculty currently make use of the virtual learning environment, which the team believes could be resolved in such a way as to ensure the realisation of the potential benefits of this technological teaching support.

2.47 Overall, NYUL has demonstrated that it pays close attention to the quality of student learning opportunities, and the students who met the review team, all of whom were from a single United States university, were unanimous in their satisfaction with all aspects of their experience, and with the reassurance about their safety and security available to their parents and families. All relevant Expectations are met, and in all cases the element of risk involved is classified as low. The review team concludes that the quality of student learning opportunities at NYU in London meets UK expectations.

3 Judgement: The quality of the information about learning opportunities

Expectation (C): UK higher education providers produce information for their intended audiences about the higher education they offer that is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.

Quality Code, Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision

Findings

3.1 The University is responsible for the accuracy of recruitment and admissions information, which is managed on its behalf by the Office of Global Programs and relevant academic depa

The quality of the information about learning opportunities: Summary of findings

3.6 In reaching its judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

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4 Judgement: The H Q K D Q F H R H W W G H D U Q L Q J R S S R U W X Q L W L H V

Expectation (Enhancement) : Deliberate steps are being taken at provider level to improve the quality of students' learning opportunities.

Findings

4.1

The enhancement of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

4.5 In reaching its judgement about the quality of student learning opportunities, the review team matched its findings against the criteria specified in Annex 2 of the published handbook.

4.6 As an integral part of New York University, NYUL is not in a position to produce its own Strategic Plan or Enhancement Policy, but nonetheless takes a firm and deliberate approach to improving the quality of student learning opportunities. In doing so it is guided by

5 Commentary on the Theme : Student Employability

Findings

5.1 NYUL, while its undergraduate students do not graduate directly but continue their studies elsewhere, shares the University's aim to improve employability skills and contribute to developing careers opportunities. To this end NYUL engages with the University's Wasserman Centre for Career Development, which supports student workshops and career counselling provision in London; it welcomes visits from the University's Careers Counsellor

Enhancement
The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in our review processes.

Expectations
Statements in the Quality Code that set out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

Flexible and distributed learning
A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations.
See also distance learning .

Framework
A published formal structure. See also framework for higher education qualifications .

Framework for higher education qualifications
A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards. QAA publishes the following frameworks: The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (FHEQ) and The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland (FQHEIS).

Good practice
A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review team, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's audit and review processes.

Learning opportunities
The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcomes

Programme specifications
Published statements about the intended learning outcomes of programmes of study, containing information about teaching and learning methods, support and assessment methods, and how individual units relate to levels of achievement.

Public information
Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

Quality Code
Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations that all providers are required to meet.

Reference points
Statements and other publications that establish criteria agai