



Review of UK transnational education in Greece: Queen Margaret University and AKMI Metropolitan College

November 2015

Executive summary

The partnership between Queen Margaret University (QMU) and AKMI Metropolitan College (AMC) in Greece was formally established in 2001, as one of the University's first transnational education (TNE) partnerships. QMU offers validated programmes through AMC, each programme based on an existing QMU programme but modified for the Greek local context. AMC programmes are available in both of QMU's academic Schools: Arts, Social Sciences and Management, and Health Sciences. Two programmes were initially approved in 2002 and the partnership now offers five collaborative programmes, with an aspiration to grow the portfolio further in the coming years. AMC is currently the University's largest TNE partner provider. With the exception of the BA Media Production, each programme is offered at both AMC Athens and Thessaloniki campuses, with a total of 547 registered students in 2014-15.

Most academic programmes are delivered using a dual-language delivery model, with years one and two delivered in Greek, followed by years three and four delivered in English. This model is designed to safeguard the quality and standards of a QMU award, while being mindful of the Greek context and of students' initial lack of preparedness for full-time English teaching. The exception to this model is BA Media Production, which is taught and assessed in Greek across all years. Programmes delivered via the dual-language structure balance the requirements of UK professional bodies for English delivery with Greek national recognition requirements for Greek delivery, thus allowing future employability options to be kept open. From the start, terminology and practice examples are provided from both English and Greek contexts to support student development and aid transition to full English delivery in later years.

English language classes are available to all students throughout their studies and delivered locally through the AMC student support facilities, and a student English language declaration is signed upon acceptance to the programme outlining the student's responsibility to obtain the required English language competency to progress into the third year of study.

QMU has developed effective channels to ensure the student voice is heard and responded to across its collaborative partnership with AMC. Annual Monitoring Reports include a dedicated section on student feedback with an associated action plan, and these reports are also considered at Programme Committee meetings with student representation. Improvements made to programmes are implemented promptly, and this highlights an effective partner relationship.

Introduction

1 Having acquired taught degree awarding powers in 1992 and research degree-awarding status in 1998, leading to full University status in 2007, Queen Margaret University (QMU) is one of four universities in the city of Edinburgh, and currently supports approximately 6,500 students in subject disciplines associated with health and social sciences, arts and business management programmes.

2 The partnership with AKMI Metropolitan College (AMC) dates back to 1999. AMC identified QMU as a highly regarded educational provider in subjects allied to health sciences, with expertise in disciplines not available in Greece at the time, in particular speech and language therapy. The partnership was formally established in 2001 with the pilot of BSc (Hons) Logopaedics as a validated programme, and has steadily grown each year, with 547 registered students on five programmes on AMC's Athens and Thessaloniki campuses in 2014-15, and the number of programmes increasing to 10 in 2015-16.

3 The University's strategic priority to strengthen existing partnerships has prompted growth in programmes offered by AMC and validated by QMU, resulting in AMC now being established as the University's largest transnational education (TNE) partner. Programmes offered are based on existing QMU offerings, using established expertise and successful programmes validated in the UK, such as Occupational Therapy, but adapting the programmes to incorporate local Greek context and learning examples. Although the programme learning outcomes for most of the programmes remain the same, due to the changes through contextualisation, QMU classify them as validated rather than franchised delivery arrangements. Senior AMC staff explained to the review team that the validated model was better suited than the franchised model to the localised course components and in-country clinical placements that are required for subjects allied to medicine.

4 The University's International Strategy 2011 identifies the intention to increase postgraduate recruitment and to provide sustainable overseas income generation. The programmes offered through AMC are predominately at undergraduate level, with recent expansion into postgraduate offerings through the MSc Advanced Dietetic Practice and a suite of business programmes. The partner is charged a fixed rate per programme validated and delivered, which covers ongoing costs associated with quality assurance of the partnership and is outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement. Each programme has a capped student intake limit and additional costs are incurred by the College if recruitment exceeds allocation.

5 Programme teams at AMC are responsible for both teaching and student support. An Academic Link Person (ALP) based in QMU is appointed for each programme arrangement. The ALP provides the main academic liaison link between the institutions, operating at a devolved School level. All programme leaders at partner institutions must speak English. External examiners are appointed by QMU for years three and four, and where possible cover both UK delivery at QMU and Greek-validated delivery at AMC. Where honours years are delivered in Greek, translation services are implemented for internal moderation and external moderation is undertaken by bilingual external examiners.

6 In July 2015, the Portfolio Development Group agreed to expand provisions at AMC to the Piraeus campus, Athens, complementing the College's senior management aspirations to grow the partnership further in the future.

Developing, agreeing and managing arrangements for setting up and operating the link

7 The QMU Collaborations Manual outlines the process for pursuing a new international partnership and programmes, as well as ongoing partnership protocols, including clearly articulated flowcharts. This guidance is clear and appropriate. As the AMC partnership was established more than 15 years ago, many of the processes now implemented were not in place at its inception. Efforts have been made to retrofit procedures as and when appropriate to improve standards and effective collaborative practice. The International Strategy refers to proactive identification of suitable partners, indicating that the portfolio of QMU collaborative partners and programmes may grow in the future.

8 When establishing a new programme with a new collaborative partner, a three-stage process is conducted to assess the partner with regard to strategic, financial and academic suitability. The Partnership Development Manager (PDM) acts as the first liaison channel to assess partner suitability against defined criteria. If deemed eligible, the PDM prepares the partner to supply required documentation and an ALP is identified within the appropriate academic School. This documentation feeds into the due diligence assessment and is submitted to the Portfolio Development Group (PDG), which conducts formal partner proposal scrutiny, including consideration of the institution's financial accounts.

9 It is now institutional policy to visit a potential partner in advance of any formal collaborative agreement being established. The initial site visit is normally conducted by a member of QMU's senior management team or another member of PDG who typically resides outside the host school, and takes place after Stage 1 exploratory discussions and basic due diligence checks. It is not required for an academic from the host school to visit at this time and the initial visit can be waived completely should the host school have sufficient evidence to propose a site visit unnecessary, though this occurs only in exceptional circumstances. Stage 2 of the process involves the site report, detailed due diligence checks, a post-visit risk assessment and detailed financial costings. At Stage 3 the PDM develops a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), complete with fee-pricing structure, and the relevant ALP, in consultation with the Programme Leader at the partner institution, begins detailed planning for the validation of the proposed programmes.

10 When establishing a new programme with an existing partner, the new programme is proposed to QMU by the partner for consideration. The same process is then followed, with Stage 1 and Stage 2 paperwork being considered by the PDG. However, the need for a site visit and due diligence will normally be waived. Documentation for the validation event is created in collaboration with the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement, including a draft timetable and list of panel members, to ensure criteria such as externality are satisfied in advance of the event.

11 The validation process and criteria against which the collaborative programmes are assessed are the same as those used in QMU UK programme validation. The validation event is typically held at the partner institution and chaired by a QMU representative. It is the responsibility of the Programme Leader to organise the event, and step-by-step requirements are outlined in the QMU Quality Assurance Handbook. In the case of new programmes with existing partners, no further site visit is required unless there has been substantial change at the partner institution or specialist facilities are required for the programme, and no further institution-level due diligence checks are required.

12 Each programme is validated for a maximum five-year period and is subject to review and revalidation at the end of this term. During the validated period, each programme is subject to annual monitoring review, which is coordinated through the ALP and submitted to the Joint Board of Studies (JBS). The JBS is a joint board of representatives of the AMC

programme team, which meets with the ALP and the relevant Head of Division or Dean from QMU. A composite report of all Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) from collaborative partners is created by the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement and submitted to the Collaborations Operations Group (COG) and PDG for consideration.

13 PDG takes formal responsibility for oversight of the full QMU programme portfolio and its development, including central approval of new programmes and ongoing monitoring. PDG considers whether a partner review is required for high-risk partnerships. However, ultimate responsibility for oversight of the partnership resides more widely with Senate. The process of PDG programme oversight includes financial review and risk assessment. The collaborative partnership risk assessment policy was implemented in 2011, and classifies collaborative programmes as high, medium or low risk, based on a series of comprehensive metrics. Each programme undergoes an individual risk assessment review annually. Risk assessment reports are created by the Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement in collaboration with the ALP and received in full by the relevant host School senior management teams through the School Academic Board. A composite report summarising risk scores across all collaborative programmes is submitted to COG annually. AMC programmes are currently assessed as medium-low to low risk. PDG and COG consideration of programme risk is a separate process from that conducted at School Academic Board level, and neither process evaluates aggregated risk ratings per collaborative partner of their full programme portfolio.

14 Based on programme-level risk assessment outcomes, PDG can decide to undertake partnership review using established guidance, which outlines circumstances that might trigger the formal convening of a Partnership Review Panel, such as high-risk classification of a partner's programmes for a number of years. Academic ownership and approval of programmes resides first and foremost with the School Academic Board, though it is through the PDG programme risk assessment mechanism that a partner review may be triggered.

15 QMU operates an annual risk-based programme-level review process. However, should programmes be identified as high risk for a number of consecutive years, or serious concerns be raised, PDG reserves the right to convene a Partnership Review Panel to investigate the issues and propose recommendations to Senate regarding the partnership status.

16 Since the AMC partnership was formed, QMU has also evolved procedures in the light of feedback and practice with collaborative arrangements. For example, initial due diligence now requires minimum resource infrastructure checks for core services such as IT provision, and QMU support staff can request visits to TNE campuses to assess the effectiveness of support provision.

17 Institutional review of a partnership is now typically conducted every five years, as per the agreed schedule outlined in the MoA. The five-year partner review includes conducting due diligence checks and reviewing the terms of the MoA. This process was established in 2014, but was not in place at the time of initial partnership. For the AMC partnership, an initial site visit was conducted in 1999 and the last due diligence check was conducted in 2005 as a prelude to partnership review. The partnership is not scheduled for further review until 2018.

18 Since the last due diligence check of AMC in 2005, the College has expanded considerably, with new and expanded campuses, 11 new academic partnerships, and a four-fold increase in student numbers since 2011. This has had an impact on the student experience on the Athens campus, leading to pressure on resources, such as space for individual and group work, wireless network access and library resources, and this has been

picked up in annual monitoring. Given the volume of change within the AMC collaboration since the last partner review in 2005, QMU is **recommended** to conduct a partner review of AMC before 2018.

Quality assurance

Academic standards

19 The partnership MoA includes a clear and detailed breakdown of committee structures pertinent to the partnership. QMU retains ultimate oversight for quality assurance, including responsibility for the appointment of external examiners, with the ALP as the main point of contact between the University and College, and English identified as the language of partner liaison.

20 The academic approval process is fully outlined in the QMU Quality Assurance Handbook, which is supplied to partners and available both online and in document form. The Handbook serves as a central reference point for partnership liaison with the ALP, and staff at AMC told the review team how useful they found it.

21 The process by which new programmes are validated includes formation of a validation panel comprising internal and external school representation, which considers the programme proposal and makes recommendations regarding next steps. Panel members must have validation experience and at least one requires experience of collaborative arrangements. Outcomes of supported new programmes are then submitted to the Learning and Teaching Panel, which confirms that any conditions of the validation have been met by the programme team and then makes recommendations to Senate, through the Student Experience Committee, regarding support for validation and the period of programme approval, which is typically five years. This approval period, once ratified by Senate, is then outlined as the review schedule that features in the partner MoA.

22 Annual monitoring collaborative programme reports are compiled by the programme leaders and submitted first to the JBS for discussion, then to the respective Head of Division and Dean of School.

23 AMRs and Programme Leader comments across all collaborative arrangements are then consolidated into a single annual report by the Registry Partnership Development team, and submitted to the COG for consideration. The 2012-13 annual report highlighted some variable quality between collaborative arrangements at multiple delivery sites, and progress on improving the consistency of quality standards appears to be underway through, for example, the provision of additional support from the ALP and staff development training for AMC programme leaders on writing AMRs, led by QMU staff.

24 QMU-AMC undergraduate programmes are typically of four years' duration, with the first two years taught in Greek and subsequent years delivered in English. A minority of programmes in media and in business have a three-year structure and are delivered wholly in Greek, while all postgraduate provision is delivered wholly in English. The undergraduate dual-language structure was implemented to develop students' English language skills progressively prior to delivery in English, and in response to local market demand for dual-language degrees. Students whom the review team met expressed their general satisfaction with this approach.

25 The language used for partnership and programme management is consistently English, and AMC programme leaders must therefore be bilingual, even when the full programme is delivered in Greek. At present, all QMU ALPs are English speakers with no Greek language competence. As a means of ensuring parity of experience and of sharing

practice across AMC programmes based in different academic Schools, QMU has established an ALP forum for key staff members involved in managing the partnership. The forum is not a formal committee and does not report to any specific body within the University committee structure, although it can refer issues to the respective School Academic Boards or to the COG as appropriate. The purpose of the forum is to allow discussion between the staff working in different divisions, the School Office, and Governance and Quality Enhancement, with a view to coordinating activity, sharing information and promoting consistency of practice. It also functions as a support mechanism for new ALPs.

26 Minutes of the ALP forum show generally good levels of attendance, as well as concerted efforts from one meeting to the next to address shared operational concerns. The review team was unclear as to how influential the ALP forum was at this stage in bringing important operational matters to the attention of senior committees, but felt that it made an important contribution to articulating operational matters of common concern and to identifying shared solutions. Topics discussed at the ALP forum include staff development at AMC, the recognition of UK awards by Greek professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and a range of language-related matters, such as the need for Greek-speaking bilingual moderators, common appointment criteria to assure the English language ability of staff appointed by AMC, and translation issues. The cross-School approach of the ALP forum to the resolution of operational aspects of course delivery and the adoption of consistent practices is a **positive feature**.

27 QMU does not currently employ bilingual staff members to support partnership arrangements. However, in recognition of the volume of moderation that will be required for the newly validated business programmes, the University intends to appoint a full-time, bilingual member of academic staff prior to their commencement. The postholder will be responsible for the bulk of moderation in Greek and will work closely with the ALP to oversee the health of the partnership. In other disciplines, staff competence in Greek continues to depend on programme leaders at AMC and on Greek-speaking external examiners who are not permanent members of the University staff.

28 While QMU delivers programmes partly, and in some cases entirely, in Greek, there is little guidance about language issues available to academic teams at the point of initial validation. The Academic Collaboration Quality Manual requires a statement in the proposal documentation about the language of instruction and assessment if it is not English, as well as details of mechanisms to ensure the standard and quality of student work, but provides little guidance about the nature of these mechanisms. Similarly, the Programme Development section of the Quality Assurance Handbook provides no guidance regarding delivery in a language other than English.

29 Such guidance is needed because validation reports demonstrate variation in the depth of their coverage of policy on language-related issues, and because both ALP forums and annual risk assessments of programmes have identified a number of language issues in programmes that are already running.

30 In 2014 the Senate considered a discussion paper on the mechanisms for assuring quality of collaborative provision delivered in a language other than English. Senate's discussion of the risks identified, and ways of addressing them, was further developed in October 2014 in a COG paper on assessment in a language other than English. This paper notes Senate's strong support for the proposal that at least one native speaker of the respective language of delivery and assessment be appointed to the host Division at QMU to support any partnership not delivered in English. It also notes Senate's consideration of the proposal that a more systematic approach be taken to verifying translated scripts provided by the partner institution. COG members were asked to note these discussions, which would

be referred back to a combination of PDG and the Greek ALPs group. The review team took the view that although they had served to articulate a number of the issues and risks involved in assuring the quality and standards of programmes delivered by partner institutions in a language other than English, these deliberations did not in themselves constitute a language and translation policy. Such a policy would act as a single point of reference for programme teams involved in validation, monitoring and review activity. QMU is **recommended** to approve a language and translation policy that identifies the risks involved in delivering and managing programmes in a language other than English, and to clarify its expectations as to how those risks will be managed at programme level.

31 The minutes of the ALP forum show slow progress towards implementing Senate's 2014 support for the appointment of a bilingual Greek-English member of staff in each Division involved in the delivery of programmes at AMC. Although samples of student work written in Greek are routinely translated into English and sent to QMU, the same is not true of practical or oral work which can only be assessed and moderated in Greek. While the University intends to appoint a permanent, bilingual member of academic staff prior to the first intake of its newly validated business programmes, other subject areas intend to employ bilingual moderators on non-core contracts to undertake this work. The ALP forum iterated the need for bilingual moderators at its four meetings between September 2014 and May 2015. The minutes of the meeting of May 2015 indicated that it was unlikely that the posts would be filled until 2015-16 and the review team understood that they had still not been filled at the time of the review visit.

Assessment

32 All degree programmes awarded by QMU are required to adhere to QMU's general assessment regulations, which are outlined in the programme validation document. Any deviation from the QMU general regulations must be approved by the validation panel at the programme validation event. This event also considers the corresponding student programme handbook, which is required to contain reference to the academic assessment regulations for the programme, including any programme-specific regulations. Conditions of validation are agreed by the validation panel, and deadlines by which these conditions must be met are also outlined. These conditions are appropriate and consistently followed by AMC collaborative programmes for both general and programme-specific assessment regulations.

33 An assessment strategy is required for each programme. This must demonstrate alignment with learning outcomes of the programme, which are outlined in the validation document and subsequently approved by the validation panel on behalf of Senate. Validation documentation makes appropriate use of external reference points such as the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), the Health and Care Professions Council, relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Student handbooks also outline the SCQF and credit guidelines.

34 Programme leaders are responsible for the conduct and quality standards of assessment across a given programme, with responsibility for module assessment devolved to the Module Leader. QMU retains oversight of this practice, with collaborative partners through the programme approval process and ALP liaison. External examiners are nominated by QMU and the partner and appointed by Senate, and all assessment decisions are considered by the Board of Examiners, a body that is also approved by QMU. Any changes made to the programme and its assessment must be recommended for approval to the School Academic Board by the JBS, and the external examiner must be notified directly by the Programme Leader. The external examiner report template includes confirmation of assessment instruments being made available in advance for review, and all

completed reports scrutinised by the review team showed external examiner satisfaction with this process.

35 For most collaborative provision where the language of instruction is not English, QMU staff internally moderate a translated sample of student work from the partner institution, based on the metrics outlined in the Academic Collaboration procedures document. However, in 2014 COG recommended and Senate approved revised moderation regulations designed to provide Schools with the opportunity to relax moderation procedures for trusted partners. The revised moderation guidelines recognise that as partnerships mature, the partner's understanding of QMU marking standards and processes may reach a point at which QMU link staff feel confident that the partner can take over internal moderation themselves, thereby removing the need to translate samples of student assessed work. This is the case, for example, with the Athens Media team, who have been working with QMU for 11 years with a relatively stable staff complement. The staff whom the review team met confirmed this new arrangement, and acknowledged that the removal of internal moderation of student assessed work in translation by QMU staff added to the importance of the role played by the bilingual external examiner for the BA Media Production, which is taught and assessed entirely in Greek.

36 It is the responsibility of the collaborative partner to provide students with feedback on their assessment performance. QMU typically aims to provide feedback within four weeks, which is outlined in the assessment regulations. In the light of student feedback, the AMC JBS is considering local policy development for quicker feedback turnaround on exam scripts, but overall the students whom the review team met were content with feedback quality.

37 Typically, external examiners moderate work at programme levels (years) three and four. In four-year programmes, these are the two years taught in English, as a result of which external examiners do not need to be bilingual. The current exception to this is the BA Media Production programme, which is delivered wholly in Greek. A bilingual external examiner has been appointed to this programme. Intermediate awards are supported on all other programmes, but as the programme specifications make clear, these subsidiary exit awards do not have established professional body recognition and for this reason an unnamed Diploma (240 credits) or Certificate (120 credits) in HE is awarded. These exit qualifications do not have separate programme learning outcomes and are not currently subject to scrutiny by an external examiner.

38 External examiner responsibilities are outlined in the External Examining Handbook. External examiner reports are received annually by the QMU Principal, circulated to relevant senior staff and considered by the Programme Committee, which includes student representation. Programme Leaders are responsible for responding to external examiner reports, and a draft response is discussed and approved by the Programme Committee. The annual monitoring process requires inclusion of external examiner reports and responses, complete with an action plan. External examiner reports are also available to students on the virtual learning environment, and the students whom the team met during the review visit were all aware of this channel.

39 A number of examples exist of revisions to AMC programmes, showing ongoing enhancement and improvements being made to the portfolio in the light of external examiner and student feedback. BA Media Production recently revised delivery to a three-year streamlined programme, aligning assessment practice with industry requirements and improving student employability potential. When delivery of the BSc Logopaedics programme recommenced, assessment issues were encountered in its first year of operation, which were addressed promptly through revisions implemented the following year.

Quality of learning opportunities

40 Applicants for programmes delivered in both Greek (years one and two) and English (years three and four) are required to complete a declaration form confirming their understanding that they will need to achieve an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score of 6, or a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) iBT score of 79-80 to progress to level/year three of the programme. QMU has developed a policy specifically for AMC health care programmes specifying English language entry requirements and levels of attainment required for progression between years two and three. Students are supported by on-campus English tuition. This English language provision is well received by students who regard it as appropriate to their needs.

41 The English language attainment of students and progression onto year three has in the past been somewhat depressed on the Thessaloniki campus compared with the Athens campus, particularly on the BSc (Hons) Physiotherapy programme. As a result of concerns about English language attainment being raised as an issue in student surveys, and through the annual monitoring process, AMC is addressing this by providing additional English language support, including terminology. This was confirmed by the students whom the review team met.

42 The student voice is expressed through AMC's Student-Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC) meetings and through student surveys, and is reported on specifically within the AMR for each programme. The SSCC is a forum for constructive discussion between students and staff on programme-specific items, across all programme years. It meets at least once per semester and its membership comprises AMC students and staff, with a greater number of the former. Student representatives are invited to convene and minute the Committee. SSCC minutes are attached to the AMR report and discussed at JBS meetings. All students are requested to complete end-of-module evaluation surveys, which are analysed and responded to formally through the AMR, while also being discussed at SSCC and Programme Committee meetings. The AMR report template includes dedicated headers to respond to issues raised through student feedback, with all sections feeding explicitly into the programme's annual action plan. This report is submitted to the JBS, which the MoA requires partner institutions of the University to establish. The minutes of the JBS confirm that it examines the responses to the student voice proposed during the annual monitoring round. The minutes of the JBS are received by the relevant School Academic Board at QMC, which in turn reports to Senate. The presence of student representatives at these deliberative committees provides transparency and a further guarantee of accountability. Students whom the review team met felt that their voice was heard, and noted the effectiveness of the JBS and of the student representative system in general. They were able to provide examples of changes that had been made at their request. The attentiveness of the College and the University to the student voice and its embedding in the annual monitoring process is a **positive feature** of the provision.

43 The MoA devolves responsibility to AMC for providing students with learning resources equivalent to those provided at QMU. QMU complements these by providing access to e-library resources and online study support for AMC students through its VLE. Students were enthusiastic about the VLE and about levels of support in general.

44 All AMC students are assigned a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) and in accordance with QMU's PAT policy for collaborative provision, the PAT is a member of staff within the partner institution, which is of particular importance where programmes are delivered in Greek. The personal tutor system was valued highly by the students whom the review team met.

45 The ALP provides guidance and continuity to partner staff throughout the delivery of collaborative provision, with AMC teams identifying the role as key to the success of their programmes. This guidance extends into professional development support where, for example, ALPs provide training for AMC clinical educators based on QMU's longstanding experience in this area. AMC staff have also been supported by ALPs in developing effective student feedback mechanisms. A staff development framework for overseas partners was recently considered by COG, which agreed staff should be provided with the opportunity to study for the online PG Cert in Professional and Higher Education, which QMU will facilitate for AMC staff from 2016-17 after piloting the programme in 2015-16.

Information on higher education provision

46 As outlined in the partnership MoA, the University must approve before publication all information bearing its name, which, if appropriate, would then be translated into Greek for AMC use. This includes student handbooks, for which English is largely retained, and links referring to QMU policies in English. AMC also produces a number of complementary resources for student induction that bear only the AMC name and thus do not require QMU approval.

47 Information provided to students upon application and prior to commencing study is coordinated by the collaborative partner through the partner website and local student support services. Admission processes are outlined in the programme validation document, and students whom the review team met felt that they had received sufficient information to make an informed decision about their programme choice and what was expected of them. English language requirements are communicated at the earliest stage of application, as failure to achieve the necessary level of language competence would disqualify students from progressing into year three of study. All students felt that the English language requirements were communicated adequately.

48 Student handbooks are submitted with the initial validation documentation considered by the programme validation panel, and follow the structure of QMU programme handbook examples provided by the ALP. The handbook is the main source of information for students during their studies, and students confirmed that the handbook is a useful resource. Programme-level information is monitored and reviewed at local level through the Academic Board of Study and programme admin processes, in collaboration with the ALP.

49 It is through the AMRs that programme teams reflect on their attainment and retention figures and outline recruitment targets in consultation with the programme committees. AMRs are then collated by the QMU Partnership Development team and reported to COG for review. In practice, this process works well - committees have access to both composite and full reports for reference, and COG identifies trends across partners to inform enhancement and follow up developments.

50 Students studying on AMC programmes can apply for transfer to QMU programmes based in the UK, where appropriate. However, because AMC programmes are validated rather than franchised, variation in content prevents direct transfer to QMU. Students wishing to transfer would be required to meet standard QMU entry requirements, including those for English language competence. Students whom the review team met were content to study in Greece and showed little interest in transfer to QMU, and staff were not aware of any instances of student transfer.

51 Collaborative partner students graduate with a QMU degree certificate and an academic transcript outlining the location of study and the language of assessment, both signed by the University Secretary. The certificate states that it must be read in conjunction with the associated academic transcript.

Conclusion

Positive features

The following positive features are identified:

- the cross-School approach of the ALP forum to the resolution of operational aspects of course delivery and the adoption of consistent practices (paragraph 26)
- the attentiveness of the College and QMU to the student voice and its embedding in the annual monitoring process (paragraph 42).

Recommendations

QMU is recommended to take the following action:

- to conduct a partner review of AMC before 2018 (paragraph 18)
- to approve a language and translation policy that identifies the risks involved in delivering and managing programmes in a language other than English, and to clarify its expectations as to how those risks will be managed at programme level (paragraph 30).

Queen Margaret University's response to the review report

Queen Margaret University thanks the review team for their detailed report. We welcome the commendations, which attest to the work that has been done by both ourselves and our partner over the years to enhance the student experience and build a quality culture.

The University notes the recommendations and will give attention to addressing these. We recognise that the partnership with AMC has evolved considerably over the last 15 years and we acknowledge the merits of conducting some form of review to reflect the current status. We will give due consideration to the format of this review but as a minimum it will include an updating of due diligence information, in line with the expectations of the Quality Code.

We will also develop further our language policy, seeking advice from those working closely with this partnership and drawing on best practice in the sector.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
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Tel 01452 557050
Web www.qaa.ac.uk