External Examiner Online Report A

CENTRE DETAILS & CERTIFICATION

REPORT DETAILS

Report Type	Second Sampling
Centre Name	GRAFTON COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
Centre Number	03966
Standards Verifier (EE) Name	MR M HOPKINS
AA Number	956615
Has Been Submitted	Yes

VISIT DETAILS

Date Of Sampling	11/01/2016
Feedback Presented To	Prof M Jehangir & Mehboob Saiyed
Designation	Head of Academics. Director of Finance

PROGRAMME EVALUATION SUMMARY

Programme No.	Programme Title	No. of Reg.	Status
NJU86	BUSINESS (QCF)	1	Released
NJU87	BUSINESS (QCF)	466	Released
NJU89	BUSINESS (MANAGEMENT) (QCF)	202	Released

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SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Action Points From Last Report

The college have addressed the assignment issues by re-writing each assignment brief to a very high standard. All now contain an effective vocational scenario and all are contextualized so as to allow merit and distinction grades to be achieved across the whole unit rather than one specific learning outcome. All learner work has been re-marked to the new assignment briefs and results have been amended as required.

Tutorials have now been developed to become more formal and are both learner and system driven, previously these were driven by the individual learner only. Opportunities are now given for learners to set SMART targets to develop their performance, creating improved Individual Learning Plans which was also a concern during previous visits. These revised action should have an impact on identifying at risk learners quickly and thus improving drop out figures which was a concern.

 The frequency of support for one-to-ones has been made weekly which is an improvement on previously reported meetings of once a month.

Summary of Essential Actions

 No essential actions raised by the external examiner.

Summary of Recommendations

Management of Academic Standards

The induction form to be amended to include open questions thus allowing the learner to show and share a full and detailed opinion.

Whilst standardisation is carried out, it is not totally clear that the expected process is being carried out. The process expected is for all assessors agreeing to the standard set by one assessor on a piece of evidence re-assessed by each individual assessor. This should take place in a similar way covering each assessor's initial assessment of one piece of work. If agreement is not reached in the first sample, then additional samples need to be worked through until agreement on the assessment decisions is reached. At that stage all assessors can continue to assess their own students' work. This will then be followed by internal verification. It should be realised that standardisation comes before full assessment and followed by internal verification.

By Date | 11/01/2016

Effectiveness of Assessment Instruments

Continue to develop assignment briefs annually and for new cohorts so as to minimise plagiarism.

By Date | 01/09/2016

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General Comments

Mention any points you may wish to make, including:
comments on administration; communication with the centre; access to material needed to carry out the external examination; and
comments about how the centre is meeting the expectations of the QAA Code of Practice and addressing the Academic Infrastructure.

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Communication with the college has been excellent with any requirements and issues dealt with in a timely
and effective manner.

There seems to be a culture developing within the college of continuous improvements which was not
apparent in previous visits, this is good to see.
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Areas of Good Practice

Identify any areas of particularly good practice mentioned in other sections of this report.

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It is clear the college have taken on board comments from previous visit and have acted promptly and with
professionalism to eradicate the issues from previous reports.


The development of the IT labs to support assignment development under the guidance of the tutor.

The tutors are very knowledgeable, very well experienced and learner focused as evidenced by the learners
themselves.

The internal verification system is in place and working effectively with each learner sampled at least
once per year.

Staff CPD is on-going.
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DETAILED COMMENTS

Management of Academic Standards

Comment on the presence of effective management procedures that are supported by appropriate systems and policies. Make specific reference to the management of any programmes run on a collaborative basis in other institutions.
Comment also on the operation of assessment meetings, including:
• the fairness and consistency of decisions
• the decision making process
• administrative support for the meetings
• the scope of the minutes of previous meetings
• the organisation and conduct of the meetings.

There have been a total of 90 samples taken in two visit from myself and Elisabeth Newman, all sample decisions have been agreed with those of the assessors. From this one can conclude the assessors are marking accurately across all units. The internal verification process is well practiced and works very well. Internal Verification training has been undertaken by a number of teaching staff which serves to underpin confidence in this area. Internal verification is carried out at the end of each module and each learner is sampled throughout the year. A sample in the region of 20% in standard practice within the college. All assignment briefs are internally verified before being given to the learners. Standardisation is carried out, it is not totally clear that the expected process is being carried out.

There is evidence of the new learners attending induction days with external guest speakers present. The design of the day seems very good and would offer valuable information to the new learners. At the end of the induction day individual learners complete a form to indicate they fully understood the processes explained. Comments boxes have added to the feedback forms since the last visit replacing the tick box type questions. However, these comment boxes use specific closed questions - it was agreed that open questions would be more useful and amendments will be made.

The college employ a welfare office for learner advice and guidance which is good practice. From discussions with learners and with Dr Kazmi tutors work extremely hard to support the individual learner, I would suspect the same can be said of the welfare officer.

Staff and team meetings happen on a regular basis, minutes of which were available to view on the day of my visit.

Recommendation

The induction form to be amended to include open questions thus allowing the learner to show and share a full and detailed opinion.

Whilst standardisation is carried out, it is not totally clear that the expected process is being carried out. The process expected is for all assessors agreeing to the standard set by one assessor on a piece of evidence re-assessed by each individual assessor. This should take place in a similar way covering each assessor's initial assessment of one piece of work. If agreement is not reached in the first sample, then additional samples need to be worked through until agreement on the assessment decisions is reached. At that stage all assessors can continue to assess their own students' work. This will then be followed by internal verification. It should be realised that standardisation comes before full assessment and followed by internal verification.

By Date | 11/01/2016

Effectiveness of Assessment Instruments

State, for each programme, whether the design and nature of the assessments permit the aims and learning objectives of the programme to be met and are of a standard appropriate to the qualification level.

The assignment briefs give details of the unit, the level of study, the assessor and IV. All relevant dates are in place. The unit aim and an introduction / vocational scenario is noted. Page two of the document highlights the requirements for submission. Referencing style requirements are now in place and noted. Since my last visit all assignment briefs have been re-written, all now have an effective vocational scenario which is related to throughout the development of each learning outcome. Effective contextualization appears for each assignment brief and is effective across the whole unit rather than specific task(s). The reliance on written tasks has now been replaced with more variety of assessment mechanisms. All assignments have been re-marked across the new briefs and amended where necessary.

Recommendation

Continue to develop assignment briefs annually and for new cohorts so as to minimise plagiarism.

By Date | 01/09/2016

Maintenance and Audit of Records

State whether the procedure for maintaining and auditing assessment records is secure and effective.

The internal verification process is robust and transparent and rigorously applied ensuring consistency across units and assessors.
Registers are completed on-line at the point of use by the course tutor. Non-attendance is dealt with in accordance with college policy. Persistent absence is dealt with verbally before a letter is sent to parents or guardian. Report forms are completed if a student leaves early with reason.
Arrangements are in place for visits from CAB staff to advise students on any related problems

Registration and Certification Claims

Summarise the process for ensuring that student registration and certification is accurate and monitored effectively.

Attendance is taken manually at point of use and then entered onto the college data base. None attendance is handled in accordance with college policy. Close monitoring exists of class attendance by preprinted lists to tutors, annotated and then entered on database by administration staff.

Data entry is done in accordance with college policy with a process in place to ensure integrity.

Meetings take place on a regular basis with minutes of these meetings available to view.

Learner applications are processed on-line and through interviews. Applications go through to the admissions team for checking on English standards (test applied - Cambridge Diagnostic Assessment - if appropriate level certificate not achieved to meet CEFR B2; ID; equivalency to country of origin certificates gained, enrolment. New learners are registered with Pearson within 30 days of enrolment.

Student Support and Review

Key areas to discuss include:
• **The assessment process, assessment feedback to students**
• **The quality of teaching, the expertise and experience of staff**
• **Physical resources and learning support for the programme**
• **Tutorial and pastoral support**
• **Opportunities for students to give feedback on their programme**
• **For HN programmes, summarise the views expressed by students, including favourable comments and any concerns raised**
• **Summary of discussions with staff**

I met with five second year learners who seems very complementary towards the college and the staff. All were able to describe the induction day in some detail and all seemed happy with the process. They (the learners) described the tests they sat and the contents of the essay they developed prior to being accepted onto the course. All seems happy with their experiences in relation to both pre and post induction. The learners all have knowledge of progression and have been given advice on an individual basis.

Tutors were described as being `friendly and knowledgeable¿ and would (the tutors) go `out of their way¿ to support learner development. All seemed to be aware of their individual grades thus far. They said they knew how to achieve the extended grades, verbal expression was available on this subject from the individual tutors.

The learner voice plays a prominent role in the development of best practice with one learner in the group being a `student rep¿.

The learners explained the importance (to them) of the study skills program which the development of assignments and research skills was shown amongst other things.

The learners attend two full days in which half the day is a taught subject within a classroom environment with the second half being devoted to the IT suite under tutor supervision where assignments are developed