

External Examiner Online Report A

CENTRE DETAILS & CERTIFICATION

REPORT DETAILS	
Report Type	First 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	04/04/2017
Feedback Presented To	Prof: Jehangir
Designation	Head of Academic Studies

PROGRAMME EVALUATION SUMMARY			
Programme No.	Programme Title	No. of Reg.	Status
TMY50	BUSINESS (HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT)	81	Released

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SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

Action Points From Last Report

Summary of Essential Actions

No essential actions raised by the external examiner.

Summary of Recommendations

Management of Academic Standards

Look to work with the learners to understand and develop work to distinction levels, Many learners seem to be content and stop at merit. From the assignments sampled it is clear there are some very capable learners at the college many could progress to the next level.

By Date

Effectiveness of Assessment Instruments

Continue to develop new assignment briefs annually using effective vocational scenarios which support higher grade development.

By Date

Registration and Certification Claims

None

By Date

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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.

This is my third year as an SV at this college and in that time I have seen continuous improvement and development across all quarters. Credit must go to Professor Jehangir whose three-year journey with the college as quality nominee and Head of Academics has coincided with vast improvements in policy documentation and implementation. This is now one of the better college in my allocations. This statement is a credit to the whole team at Grafton where a culture of team working is clearly visible.

My visit was very well planned by Professor Jehangir, all my pre-visit requirements arrived in good time.

Areas of Good Practice

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

Staff work well together sharing good practice, as reflected in the detailed feedback to learners after assessment. There is an experienced Internal Verifier who promotes the continuous improvement of assessment practice to ensure high quality outcomes. The Centre has worked diligently to produce a very worthwhile programme. Credit must also go to Professor Jehangir whose three-year journey with the college as quality nominee and Head of Academics has coincided with vast improvements in policy documentation and implementation.

Feedback to the learners is very strong reflecting how the learner could improve and develop in future work.

All the assignments are well written and follow a standardised format, all assignments are contextualised to allow the learner to develop higher grade achievement if they so wish.

The learner surveys suggest there is a very good working relationship between the tutors and the learners, all tutors are well qualified and development is ongoing. Visits and guest speakers provide excellent development opportunities and adds value to the learner journey.

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.

The college is now located in Oxford Street and have a long term lease on a six floor property. This, as my report will show later, that this college is progressive and determined to be an established quality academic institution.

All S of W and lesson plans are available as a hard copy and on the Moodle system. Staff and learners have access to this 24 hours. The Moodle software is utilised to its fullest extent with tutors having access to learner records again over 24 hours. Learner tutorials, both group and individual, are timetabled in where SMART targets are discussed and set, this seems to be having the desired effect with grades moving towards the higher end of the spectrum. As part of the tutorial process learners are given advice on study skill which includes referencing, citations, developing to higher grade achievements and assignment writing.

Of the samples marked I have no issues with the grades awarded however. a significant number of learners developed their work to merit standard then stopped. The work sampled indicates potential and these learners should be encouraged to try to develop into distinction perhaps.

One of many strengths of this college is their processes and procedures. Learner induction takes place over a two day period and clarifies to the learner careers advice, employability skills, plagiarism and the Turn-it-In process, Harvard referencing, research skills and report writing amongst other aspects. To that end plagiarism is taken very very seriously and is constantly monitored by all stakeholders through to assessment boards. There are no issues with plagiarism at this college.

All assignment briefs are re-written each year, all have an effective vocational scenario which is followed throughout the assignment brief. Contextualisation for higher grade development is effective and meets requirements very well. This is evidenced by the number of merit grades correctly awarded.

There are a number of meetings taking place throughout the year. Staff meet weekly, The assessment board meet regularly throughout the year as to the standardisation team. The SMT meet weekly. Minutes for these meetings are available to all stakeholders. The learner voice is very prominent with learners electing their own council and meeting on a regular basis. The whole process of meetings is fed through the chain of command and acted upon when required. The college have recently introduced an advisory board which consists of external stakeholders from the armed forces, universities and the home office.

Administration support is excellent. I met with a number of both teaching and administration staff during my visit these included Dr Salaman who is partially sighted, Dr Salaman gave details of the help and support given to all. There is a clear team working ethic and culture at this college.

The college currently have around 400 learners on various courses with capacity for more. The process of recruitment relies on learners applying on line or visiting the college. Interviews on a one-to-one take place with qualifications checked. Any learners not quite to the strict standards of entry required by the college will enlist on a level programme before being allowed onto the higher national programmes. The QAA report of June 2016 for Grafton college suggested that ' The maintenance of the academic standards of awards offered on behalf of its awarding organisation meets UK expectations. The quality of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations. The quality of the information about learning opportunities meets UK expectations. The enhancement of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations'.

Recommendation

Look to work with the learners to understand and develop work to distinction levels, Many learners seem to be content and stop at merit. From the assignments sampled it is clear there are some very capable learners at the college many could progress to the next level.

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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.

Assignments are well written and to national standards for this level of course. Aims, objectives and learning outcomes and deadlines are made clear on all assignment briefs. All assignment briefs list supportive and additional reading list. All carry effective vocational scenarios which carry through the whole of the assignment and into the extended grades. The extended grade are contextualised effectively as a result.

The internal verification process is a strong feature of this college, it is rigid and transparent. To that end the college employ a dedicated internal verification officer on a full time basis. CPD confirms all teaching staff have received training on the IV process

Work sampled was of a good standard and a consistent approach has been applied to the grading of assignments. All feedback is complementary and consistent with all markers ensuring areas for development are included in all feedback.

The College has a strong commitment to providing high quality vocational programmes which are skills-focused and employer-relevant and which support employability. To support this commitment the College developed an employability action plan for learners and for staff and has taken steps to engage effectively with employers. The College has also set up a business incubation unit to provide support and guidance to learners wishing to set up their own business. The College carries out supportive lesson observation reporting process to include learner views and an evaluation of the student learning experience with reference to the learning outcomes.

Recommendation

Continue to develop new assignment briefs annually using effective vocational scenarios which support higher grade development.

By Date 01/09/2017

Maintenance and Audit of Records

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

The IV process is robust with a clear audit trail of assessments to follow from the design stage to completion by a learner. Learner records are kept secure and available to all stakeholders as required. Tutorials, both group and individual are recorded with SMART targets developed for each learner.

Assessment results are co-ordinated and recorded prior to presentation at the assessment board. This is another strong area of administration by the course coordinator and the team. The maintenance of records is of a high order. All paperwork is standard, all assignments are contextualised to support higher mark development and learner grades are recorded systematically along with college policy.

Registration and Certification Claims

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

Learner registers are taken at source and are then transferred on-line which highlights absenteeism very quickly, that said absenteeism is not an issues at this college. The learners benefit from an on-line Moodle system which allows learning to take place outside of college hours.

Individual learner grades are stored electronically, a copy of which was made available to me on arrival. The internal verification process of assignment briefs and completed assignments is excellent. I have no issues in the areas discussed here.

Recommendation

None

By Date

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

The course handbook is available to each learner, this contains the college's stance on plagiarism, help and support. The college web site is very well populated and very informative. Registers and attendance records are clear and up-to-date. Formal and informal tutorials are a great strength at this college. There is a very good working relationship between tutors and learners.

Learners are given ample opportunity to voice their individual and group comments on improvement and development throughout the year. Learner surveys indicate large scale satisfaction with all aspects of the college. A very high number stated they were satisfied with the college and the course and would recommend it to others. Other responses suggested teaching staff responded quickly to issues, were knowledgeable and enthusiastic. The library and ICT facilities also scored very well.

The college are developing excellent links with a number of universities which should come on stream in the Autumn. It is expected quite a number of learners will take up this option of developing their academic careers further.