



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

INSTITUTION: Chaucer College Canterbury

ADDRESS: University Road
Canterbury
CT2 7LJ

(also at Kingsgate College
Convent Road
Broadstairs
Kent CT10 3PX)

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Professor Koji Yoshikawa

Accreditation status: Accredited

Date of inspection: 3 December 2014

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION ON ACCREDITATION: Continued Accreditation 29 January 2015

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Chaucer College Canterbury was established in 1992 by the Shumei Foundation, a Japanese educational charitable organisation which runs a small private university in Chiba, Japan. Chaucer is based both on the University of Kent (UoK) campus in Canterbury, in fully residential and self-contained leased buildings, and at Kingsgate College, Broadstairs, purpose-built as a private school in the early twentieth century and bought by Shumei in 1989. Chaucer College students are from both Shumei University and three privately-owned High Schools which sends students aged 13-17 to the UK on short courses of two to four weeks; these have run for over 10 years.

Chaucer was first accredited by BAC in January 2009; subsequent inspections from 2010 to 2012 have found it has maintained its high standards of provision. Kingsgate College was inspected for the first time in 2012. The College gained Tier 4 sponsorship in February 2009. From April 2011, Chaucer's undergraduate programme was reduced from ten to five months following revised Home Office rules relating to English language requirements. Chaucer's international students were required to enter the UK on six-month Student Visitor visas. In March 2012 Chaucer successfully gained QAA review for educational oversight with full confidence.

Students live in residential accommodation on the College campuses, except for a period of two weeks (High School students) or four weeks (undergraduates) when they experience a home-stay in Canterbury. The Accreditation Network (ANUK) student housing inspection held in October 2011 found Chaucer fully compliant in all respects and a further inspection a week ago indicates the same high standard. The high quality of residential accommodation and homestay provision meets both UK statutory requirements and those of the Japanese University (Shumei) of which it is a key part.

Following an inspection late in 2013 Chaucer has recently gained British Council accreditation on 5 March 2014 for teaching of English.

Student recruitment and registration for all Chaucer College courses is rigorously managed by Shumei both in Japan and in the UK. The permanent staff at Chaucer comprises the Chancellor, has full oversight of Chaucer's operations, and a senior academic manager at Canterbury, who is the Dean of Students for undergraduates and co-ordinates communications with Shumei. He lectures at the University of Kent and has responsibility for pastoral matters, assisted by a Welfare Co-ordinator, based on the Chaucer campus. At Kingsgate Japanese teachers who come over with the High School students work closely with British managers.

Improvements previously recommended by BAC continue to be progressively implemented. There are no outstanding requirements. There is effective academic collaboration between Chaucer and Kingsgate with regard to syllabuses, co-ordination of student activities and all aspects relating to academic matters and quality assurance. This has strengthened further since the last full inspection; the new Academic Director undertakes regular lesson observations on both sites and both undergraduate and High school syllabuses have been tightened. High school students are now formally assessed at the end of their courses.

Chaucer ensures that Kingsgate is a fully integrated part of its overall structure but also has scope for developing an autonomous identity. In 2012 Chaucer appointed a new marketing manager to develop use of the Kingsgate building by other educational groups when empty, currently for around half of the year. Whilst Kingsgate runs with some autonomy it is strongly linked to Chaucer College in matters of management, governance and finance. The division between female (at Kingsgate normally) and male (at Canterbury) High School students' provision is the parents' choice, but Chaucer is keen to ensure that provision in Chaucer and Kingsgate campuses is as comparable as possible. Chaucer's future aim is to expand its range of short courses to European and international students.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Canterbury

Currently two levels of course operate: the five-month undergraduate management (MG) courses and the two to four-week High School courses for under-18 boys. There is also an annual undergraduate four-week teacher education course involving short placements in several local primary and secondary schools. Central to the undergraduate and High School provision is English language, but the undergraduate (MG) curriculum includes a range of international and business studies topics and cultural visits. At the end of the MG undergraduate programme (first semester, first year) students return to Japan to complete their degrees at Shumei University; about a third return in the second semester of the second year to undertake a further five-month study programme. There are currently 17 undergraduates at Chaucer on the second year of their university course, and early in 2014 there were 84 first-year students who completed the five month course at Chaucer. In 2015 the arrangements will change so that all courses will run from May to September for Japanese undergraduates, mixing first and second year students so there will be about 100 on site.

Kingsgate College (Broadstairs)

The main current courses at Kingsgate are for Japanese High School female students only. However, From March to September the College is available for hire. New marketing initiatives in 2014 have included a new summer course for European students, and further short courses for non-Japanese European and international students are planned for 2015. By concentrating the Canterbury provision from May to September there will be more space freed up in 2015 for High Schools on both sites and more opportunities to introduce new courses for other students making Chaucer less dependent on its Japanese sponsor for finance.

2. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted over half a day in Canterbury. During the inspection discussions took place with several senior staff, led by the Director of Academic Programmes who acts as a de-facto Vice-Chancellor following the appointment of the new Chancellor. Short timetabled discussions took place with several teaching and administrative staff and two undergraduates. A large amount of up-to-date documentation, including recently-reviewed equality and discrimination policies was scrutinised. The focus was on changes since the last inspection and progress on the previous action points and recommendations.

3. Inspection history

Full inspection:	11 and 12 November 2008
Interim inspection:	4 February 2010
Random Spot check:	4 April 2011
Re-accreditation inspection:	29 and 30 November 2012 (Chaucer, Canterbury) 3 and 7 December 2012 (Kingsgate College, Broadstairs)

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institutio

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

Following the recent retirement of the previous Vice-Chancellor and appointment in early 2014 of a new Chancellor based at the Canterbury campus a new Director of Academic Programmes (previously Head of an English state secondary school) has been appointed to oversee academic operations. He has already acted to ensure all actions and recommendations have been fully implemented, although progress in implementation since the last inspection has apparently been good. There have been some important changes to strengthen curriculum and assessment systems for both main courses, and the introduction of short summer schools for European undergraduates has been a successful pilot for future expansion plans in order to alleviate the danger of funding shortfalls during a time of rising costs. There have been no significant changes in basic course structures or premises and staffing.

2. Response to action points and recommendations in the last report

The College must fully develop and implement the equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policy, and revise and extend the disability policy for students to include, for example, support available, adjustments, access, facilities, equipment, and health and safety aspects.

Since the appointment of a new Human Resources (HR) adviser in August 2012, Chaucer has revised and updated its key policies, including up-to-date equality and student and staff disability policies. The Director of High Schools stated that aspects are included in guidance given to High School staff as part of their induction.

The College must ensure all staff complete recognised safeguarding training as soon as possible.

Two key managers have recently attended an advanced safeguarding training course and they are scheduled to cascade details across all academic and administrative staff. The Human Resources adviser is fully aware of current developments and is ensuring that all aspects of safeguarding are brought to the notice of new and existing staff. Aspects relating to safeguarding and criminal record checks and work history (DBS) are an integral part of the recruitment process. All porters have recently had special training sessions on safeguarding with the Director of High Schools, and separate training for teachers is currently under way. The Director, as designated CPO, undertakes training for all newly-employed teachers and wardens. The student welfare officer deals with all day-to-day welfare issues for undergraduates at Chaucer and the Japanese teachers who come across with the High School students deal with aspects there.

3. Recommendations

At Kingsgate and Chaucer, the College should improve the ICT provision in classrooms to facilitate and enhance greater flexibility and learning opportunities.

Facilities have been improved since the last inspection on both sites, both in the IT room (Chaucer) and classrooms (both sites). There are at least two data projectors and computers in Kingsgate. Students confirmed that IT provision at Chaucer is good and frequently used in lessons: they gave examples of recent presentations. At Kingsgate ICT is being increasingly used in classrooms, according to the Director, although access to the computer room is not available to High School students outside lesson time. This policy is currently being reviewed.

The College should devise an assessment policy for all courses, and provide students with clear and comprehensive assessment criteria for their courses, enabling them to be fully stretched by activities. It should consider introducing more structured assessment on High School courses, including a possible Terminal test in English that could provide a measure of evaluating learning outcomes for individual students.

Expectations on students and staff have been tightened. The College has introduced a daily 15 minute peer talk session where students are paired up to develop conversation skills in English. At the end of their course High School students are now given a test and the rubric was seen during the inspection. Teachers now give students a grade based on the Common European Framework (A1 etc) and an effort grade. Students are made fully aware of their assessment at the beginning of each course. Also tests are translated into Japanese to help students. Assessment procedures for undergraduates and credits given are explained at the beginning of courses and expectations have been tightened since the last inspection. The undergraduates are also now required to be assessed on their conversational skills at the end of courses and are given grades and credits both in their subject work and effort and conversation.

The College should add a section on targets in the checklist for formal staff appraisals and conduct an annual audit to be reported to all stakeholders.

The Human Resources adviser appointed since the last inspection has responsibility for monitoring appraisals at all levels across the College; as part of this process she ensures that all staff are given appropriate development targets which are monitored rigorously; she herself recently had her appraisal with her line manager and one of her most recent targets has been to ensure that all job descriptions include a mandatory section detailing each staff member's responsibility and accountability for safeguarding. Sample documents were seen during the inspection. It is noted that checks on Japanese are rigorous and the HR adviser is fully informed through discussions with the college manager and Japanese Dean of Students. One of the last targets for the High School Director was to integrate Japanese teachers with the English teachers' staff room; their office has been moved and social activities have been facilitated. An annual audit has been carried out in both 2013 and 2014, and seen on inspection. It reviewed all aspects of management, finance and educational provision and outcomes, and reviewed programmes at all levels.

The College should encourage teachers to develop and share the best pedagogical practice, for example during staff training sessions.

The Director of High School and Director of Academic Programmes undertook a joint staff training programme on behaviour, focusing on under-18s, before the last high school programme began. They state that it has had a considerable impact in improving teachers' confidence at dealing with any issues that occur in the classroom, reducing their reliance on managers to support these issues. Other training has taken place regarding use of whiteboards, designing schemes of work, classroom feedback and assessment methods, in 2014.

3. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements – spot check

3.1 Management, Staffing and Administration

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				
The College's appraisal process is exceptionally thorough and targets are part of appraisals for staff at all levels; these targets have clearly had an impact on both staff development and the quality of teaching and learning. This has been particularly noticeable, according to the Academic Director, to help experienced staff to reflect on their own progress and aspects such as dealing with minor behaviour issues of high school students themselves.				

3.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<p>Comments</p> <p>The teacher observation process is exceptionally rigorous. New staff receive immediate observations and this helps them deal with any immediate issues. Experienced colleagues have embraced new methods, including interactive help by training on such aspects as drama techniques and using interactive whiteboards. Shared practice has been significantly developed since the last inspection. Peer talk after being piloted is now a permanent part of all courses and contributes to final assessment. Enrichment activities have been developed (in bridge building) to include more language-focused activities. Also assessment procedures have been tightened; all High School students have assessment criteria shared at beginning and graded at end to add to certification: this is clearly having a good impact in terms of giving students better preparation for the future and a more meaningful experience in the UK. There are formal exams at the end of the course: students get oral feedback from home teachers and written feedback from Chaucer staff which is remitted to Japan to inform the university and parents. The redesign of the second year undergraduate course has resulted in accelerated progress as evidenced in the summer 2014 TOEIC exam results.</p>				

3.3 Student Welfare

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<p>Comments</p> <p>High standards have been maintained. Credit card-sized ID cards have been introduced for High School students. New safety procedures and guidance for students have been introduced and are now part of their induction. A PCSO visits the college to talk to undergraduates including fire safety. The Dean of Students continues to be fully involved with all undergraduates and the Welfare Officer ensures that all off-site activities including leisure are fully monitored. The Chancellor interviews all university students on a regular basis. Child Protection and safeguarding procedures have been tightened; staff are fully compliant with DBS: there is systematic accountability for child protection shared across all staff through regular advice and training, which appears to be excellent. One outstanding feature is the distance learning module that is being introduced for all staff to assess the impact of training they have received on child protection and safeguarding. The two undergraduate students interviewed during the interim inspection stated that the environment was 'great for studies.... Teachers were friendly and really nice'. They felt they were fully stretched academically by the tuition. Overall, health and safety and welfare provision is extremely good. Kingsgate has been classed as a 'model college' by the local Fire Service following a recent external inspection. The high standards were also noted by the British Council in its recent report.</p>				

3.4 Premises and Facilities

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<p>Comments</p> <p>There has been an upgrade on ICT, with better display facilities in classrooms.</p>				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Institution’s strengths
 Staff work as an integrated team and fully understand their roles.
 There are many rigorous policies, procedures and systems in place which are properly implemented and rigorously monitored at all levels, including safeguarding, which is outstanding.
 Students are fully involved in linking with their community: a particularly noteworthy feature is volunteering done by undergraduates which helps develop their English skills. Students are becoming more willing to explore new initiatives and involve themselves in the local community over time.
 Chaucer is constantly seeking ways of enhancing its programmes for international students and to develop more courses at all levels, including junior and adult courses; this is to fully utilise facilitates, staff expertise and facilities on both sites.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
The following are recommendations:	
Complete programme of developing information technology and communication (ICT) upgrades.	M
Continue refining assessment and procedures for feedback for undergraduate students.	M
Sustain good training practice sessions to share good practice so staff are challenged to explore new areas.	M

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable	