



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

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| INSTITUTION: | Chaucer College Canterbury |
| ADDRESS: | University Road Canterbury CT2 7LJ |
| HEAD OF INSTITUTION: | Ms Catherine Vines |
| ACCREDITATION STATUS: | Accredited |
| DATE OF INSPECTION: | 7 August 2019 |
| ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: | 28 November 2019 |

1. Background to the institution

Chaucer College Canterbury (the Institution) is a limited company and registered charity, established in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1992 by a company called Shumei Eiko Limited based in Japan. Shumei Eiko Limited also owns the Shumei Foundation, which is a Japanese education charity that owns a private university in Japan and several high schools. Chaucer College Canterbury was originally set up to offer the first two years of degrees validated by the University of Canterbury, with students progressing to complete their final year at the university. The Institution discontinued the two year degree study programme as a result of the changes to UK visa requirements, and currently offers a range of courses to students from Shumei Foundation's Japanese schools and university, as well as to students from other countries in the European Union (EU) and internationally, including India, Pakistan, Russia and South America. Most of the courses are in the areas of English language, business and communication skills.

The Institution aims to develop the students' intellect and character to help them to realise their full potential, and to promote international cooperation and friendship through the study of the English language in a calm and safe environment.

The Institution has a board of directors who are responsible for the strategic management and oversight of budgets and developments. The Board of Directors is made up of representatives of the Shumei Foundation based in the UK and Japan, and UK based external members with higher education knowledge and experience of working in Japan. The Principal is a member of the Board of Directors. The Shumei Foundation has academic and welfare staff who work alongside UK appointed staff at Chaucer College to enhance the Japanese students' experience.

The Institution is based on the campus of the University of Kent in Canterbury. The subsidiary campus at Kingsgate in Broadstairs in Kent is no longer in operation.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Institution offers an undergraduate management programme of five months' duration for students from Shumei University, which is taught in English, a three-week nursing degree module and a four-week Teacher Education English course. Credits gained at Chaucer College count towards students' required degree credits in Japan. In addition, English language courses are available for those seeking work in business sectors and the medical and legal professions. All courses are delivered through face-to-face teaching in groups of no more than 14 students. Preparation courses for English proficiency examinations are also offered, including for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination.

Short residential courses, ranging from one to four weeks, are offered for students under the age of 18, who come from Japanese high schools, as well as from schools in the EU and further afield including India, Columbia, Russia, the Philippines and China. The main component of these programmes is English language teaching. The provision includes a comprehensive social and cultural programme.

Chaucer College offers open and closed short courses for students from around the world. An open course is a course that is open to any applicant meeting the entry requirements. These courses are primarily focused on English language competence. A closed course is a course for a group of students who have been selected for the programme by an agent, partner or school.

The Institution had over 1,924 enrolments in the last academic year. A significant majority of the students were under the age of 16 and were enrolled on short residential English language courses. At the time of the inspection visit, there were 167 students enrolled, with 15 students enrolled on short summer school course, seven from Russia, six from China and two from Spain. Of the rest of the students, a significant majority were studying on higher education courses and all came from Japan, with 15 further students studying part-time for IELTS preparation examinations, all for whom were female and from India, Portugal, Nepal, Columbia, the Philippines and the EU. There were approximately equal numbers of male and female students enrolled at the time of the inspection.

Shumei University credit bearing programmes recruit students three times a year in April, August and February. Short courses are delivered according to demand, with most taking place in the summer months, and recruitment taking place in the spring form short courses and the autumn for the higher education provision.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was undertaken by a single inspector over one day. Meetings were held with the Principal and members of the senior management team as well as academic, administration, finance and support staff. A meeting was also held with a group of students and a lesson observation took place. A range of documents, data and administrative processes were also inspected. The Institution engaged and cooperated fully with the inspection process.

4. Inspection History

| Inspection Type | Date |
|------------------------|--|
| Full Accreditation | 11-12 November 2008 |
| Interim | 4 February 2010 |
| Spot Check | 4 April 2011 |
| Re-accreditation | 29-30 November, 3 & 7 December 2012 |
| Interim | 3 December 2014 |
| Re-accreditation | 10-11 May 2017 |

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

The subsidiary campus at Kingsgate in Broadstairs has been closed, and all courses are now accommodated on the Canterbury campus. The Kingsgate site is being sold to release funds for the further development and enhancement of the Canterbury campus. Staff who worked at Kingsgate have been offered new roles. The former academic director for Kingsgate now works as the Account Manager, with responsibility for acting as the liaison between agents and academic teams for the open and closed summer school courses. The teaching staff have been offered sessional contracts for the summer school and other short courses.

New professional English language courses for those seeking to work in business sectors and the medical and legal professions have been introduced.

2. Response to actions points in last report

20.3 The Institution must advise students of BAC's complaints procedure.

Reference to the BAC complaints procedure has now been appropriately included in the student handbook and is linked to the Institution's own grievance and complaints policy and procedure.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that the Institution proofreads the information for students in order to remove minor errors.

Effective procedures have now been developed to ensure the accuracy of published information and to reduce the incidence of minor errors. All materials made available to students and other stakeholders are proofread by course directors and signed off by members of the senior management team. Broader publicity and brochure information is also subject to proofreading by the Marketing Manager, and the final copy is checked and authorised by the Principal.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Institution has effective processes and documentation to ensure the efficient management of its provision, including the recruitment of well qualified staff and clearly defined administrative functions.

The Institution has appropriate organisation charts for both general and academic management. The role of the Board of Directors is clearly defined and understood by the staff.

All staff are well qualified for their roles and have clear job descriptions. Staff communications are effectively managed through meetings, e-mail communications and a shared intranet for key documentation and information. The range of clear and robust policies effectively supports the effective management of the Institution.

The administrative arrangements are appropriate for the size of the Institution. Policies and procedures are clearly documented and available to staff and students as electronic and hard copies as appropriate. Data management systems are effective and securely managed.

The management of publicity materials in relation to courses offered for Japanese students is shared between the Institution, Shumei Foundation and the university. For short courses and international courses, the Institution produces leaflets and course descriptors which are checked by senior staff and the Head of Marketing prior to being authorised by senior management. Information is updated each September to ensure its currency and accuracy.

Shumei University students are selected by their university and for some programmes that they are studying in Japan, such as Hospitality Management, the five-month course in the UK is mandatory. For other programmes, effective liaison takes place with the university in Japan which ensures that Chaucer College receives clear information about all prospective students. Students on open and closed courses are selected by their schools and individual student details and evidence of English language level are provided. As appropriate, summer school courses are reflective of students' English language abilities and to effectively support their language skills development.

Attendance is effectively monitored through the use of registers and by checks made by accompanying tutors who arrive with each cohort.

Student feedback mechanisms are clear and effective. All students complete feedback surveys and provide feedback more informally through the teaching staff. The Institution uses posters to notify the students of actions taken in response to their feedback.

End of course and annual monitoring reports are produced which ensure that performance is consistently reported and evaluated. Action plans are monitored by the directors of programmes and by the senior management to review and track progress. Additional oversight is maintained by the Board of Directors.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The academic management of courses is effective and well organised. Course directors work with the human resources team to allocate appropriate staff to classes.

Courses are well organised and every course has a clear schedule of activities, which is communicated to the students. Short summer courses are tailored to the needs of the individual student groups, dependent on their level of English proficiency and the requirements of the school from which the students have come.

Short summer courses have no formal assessment and students receive certificates of course completion. The credit bearing courses have a clear schedule of assessments. Teachers use effective methods of checking student learning and understanding including the use of quizzes, group work, and work sheets as well as summative assessments. Students have appropriate opportunities to develop their independent learning skills through their module projects.

The well qualified and experienced teaching staff deliver courses to a high standard and take good account of individual student needs and learning styles in their lesson planning. Regular continuous professional development sessions are held throughout the year which effectively enable staff to share good practice and to develop and update their pedagogical skills.

The course directors ensure that resources for learning and teaching are regularly reviewed and updated, and students have access to a range of appropriate hard copy and online materials to support their learning.

Students also have access to a library and Information Technology (IT) centre and wireless access is available throughout the premises.

Assessment schedules are clearly set out in the academic calendars provided to the students on the higher education courses, and feedback to students is provided within a week on all assessments. Students have individual progress reviews and access to additional individual support as appropriate. These systems meet their needs and support their achievement effectively. Whilst course directors check that the academic standards are consistent by looking at some marked assignments, there is no formal moderation or sampling of marked work.

Students on the higher education courses receive credits which count towards their final degree. The Director of University Courses works closely with the Shumei University representative to ensure that the requirements of the validating body are met.

Clear and robust systems are in place for the administration of examinations which meet the requirements of the partner university. Chaucer College also provides an IELTS testing centre which complies with the awarding body requirements.

Advice and guidance on progression for Japanese students is managed in Japan by Shumei University. Students confirm that this meets their needs.

4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Named members of staff provide accessible and appropriate pastoral support for students. All cohorts have accompanying members of staff who are provided with on-campus accommodation and are available to provide support and advice to their students. A trained welfare officer and a team of welfare staff are also on site to offer advice and guidance. All students have access to a contact number for out-of-hours support.

Rigorous child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are in place for all students, with enhanced measures in place for students under the age of 16. The Institution fully meets all requirements for safeguarding and child protection, with trained staff and procedures that are regularly monitored by the senior management.

Appropriate policies to avoid discrimination and abuse are in place.

International students and their parents have access to appropriate advice on travelling to the UK and travel arrangements are made by the school or university sending students. All students have access to speakers of their first language, and the Institution ensures that all cultural and religious considerations are met.

All students receive clearly set out student handbooks appropriate to their course, which include a complaints procedure and a reference to BAC's complaints procedure.

Residential accommodation is well presented and have single sex accommodation blocks which also accommodate the staff accompanying the students. Separate accommodation blocks house younger students who are provided with appropriate supervision at all times. Annual inspections by external agencies ensure that the accommodation meets statutory requirements.

Homestay family accommodation is visited at least annually, and all host families undergo advanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Homestay families receive clear information and guidance and have access to 24-hour contact numbers in the event of an emergency. Students are asked to provide feedback on their homestay experiences which identifies any issues to be addressed.

A clear programme of leisure and social activities is published for students. The activities are appropriate for the length of course and the age of the participants. All activities are appropriately supervised by accompanying teachers and Chaucer College staff.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Institution has very attractive and well-maintained premises. Chaucer College has a long lease on its campus, which expires in 2089, providing for secure tenure of the premises.

Entry to the campus is securely controlled, and all staff and students are required to use their identification cards to log in and out. The reception area is permanently staffed, and clear health and safety information is displayed for students, staff and visitors. Clear signage is displayed together with information on the layout of the campus. The premises are clean and maintained to a high standard.

Students have access to a common room and games room, and the open layout of the campus provides for good circulation space.

The campus has good learning and teaching facilities, and classrooms accommodate groups of up to 14 students. The large lecture theatre provides an appropriate venue for larger group teaching and induction presentations.

Students have access to a good range of study space including in the library and in their study bedrooms. All staff have desks in either shared or private offices, which provide suitable accommodation for preparation and marking. Secure storage facilities are provided for staff and students.

There is limited social space in the accommodation blocks, with only some of the kitchens providing tables and chairs for shared meals.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The clearly defined and close partnership with the Shumei Foundation and University which effectively supports the recruitment and ongoing enhancement of the high-quality learning environment.

The effective academic management, supported by well-defined policies and procedures, which enables courses to be designed and delivered to meet the needs of individual student cohorts.

The range of support and timely assessment feedback provided to students which effectively supports student progression and achievement.

The wide range of support and guidance available to students, by both Chaucer College and teachers from the students' own school or university, which ensures students have good access to effective welfare support.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

| | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| None | <input type="checkbox"/> High | <input type="checkbox"/> Medium | <input type="checkbox"/> Low |
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RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (to be reviewed at the next inspection)

The Institution should consider introducing a system of sampling of assessment decisions to further assure the consistency of the quality of marking and feedback.

It is recommended that social space in accommodation blocks is reviewed to provide space for students to work or spend time together and share meals in the kitchen areas.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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