

# Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students

**Waltham International  
College Limited**

**Review Report**

January 2020



**Working as the Designated Quality Body for England**

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## Summary of findings and reasons

Ref	Core practice	Outcome	Confidence	Summary of reasons
S1	The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks.	Met	High	<p>From the evidence seen, the team considers that the standards set for WIC's courses are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of OfS's regulatory framework. Based on the evidence provided, the team also considers that standards described in the approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards, and the use and implementation of LTU's clear and comprehensive regulations and policies should ensure that standards are maintained appropriately.</p> <p>The team considers that, based on the evidence scrutinised, the standards that will be achieved by WIC's students are expected to be line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of OfS's regulatory framework. The team found that staff fully understand the approach taken by LTU and WIC to maintain these standards and the evidence seen by the team demonstrates that staff are committed to implementing this approach. Therefore, based on its scrutiny of the evidence provided, the review team concludes that this Core practice is met.</p>
S2	The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.	Met	High	The review team, based on the evidence, determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the WIC's courses are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The review team considered that the standards described in the approved programme documentation and in academic regulations and policies should ensure that

				<p>such standards are maintained appropriately.</p> <p>Therefore, the review team concludes, based on the evidence described above, that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers and this Core practice is met.</p>
S3	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.	Met	High	<p>The review team concludes that WIC has effective arrangements in place to ensure that the standards of LTU awards are credible and secure. WIC's plans to secure standards in the provision it delivers in partnership with LTU are robust and credible and contribute to the development of an effective working relationship with LTU to secure the standards LTU expects to be delivered under the partnership arrangement. WIC is working within LTU's regulatory framework and has also developed clear policies of its own for the management of the partnership and monitoring and review arrangements to ensure that award standards are credible and secure. The partnership agreement takes account of LTU's regulations and policies developed by WIC are aligned with LTU's requirements. The agreement is clear, comprehensive, and up to date. Although the agreement relating to the provision of the foundation year higher education programmes in Business and Management and in Health and Social Care is in its early stages, the team found that College and University staff understand their respective responsibilities for academic standards. This understanding is supported by the establishment of ongoing support from LTU to enable College staff to be clear about LTU's expectations to ensure that award standards are credible and secure. The review team</p>

				concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.
S4	The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	Met	High	The review team concludes that WIC uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and inclusive. This is because WIC's plans for the use of external expertise in maintaining standards are sound and it is refining existing policies and developing new policies which include the use of external expertise in maintaining academic standards. Staff understand the requirements for the use of external expertise provided by LTU and the close working relationships established between WIC and University staff members, in addition to training and information provided by LTU, have helped to support staff understanding of LTU's assessment processes. The responsibilities of WIC and LTU, as defined in the Memorandum of Agreement, make it clear that LTU's regulations apply to the higher education programmes delivered by WIC. These are clear and comprehensive and assessment processes are reliable, fair and transparent. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.
Q1	The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.	Met	High	The team concludes that WIC has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. Its policies and processes are aligned with LTU policies and regulations and these are applied consistently in practice as part of the initial screening of applicants prior to formal application to LTU. Information for applicants is transparent, accessible and fit for purpose. Admission requirements are clearly set out in programme documentation and are consistent with WIC and LTU requirements and are clearly presented on the website. Information about how applicants can complain and appeal against decisions is clear and accessible and shared between WIC and LTU.

				<p>WIC identifies students with special requirements through a standard process and has a clear aim to recruit students through widening participation. Admissions records demonstrate that WIC policies are implemented in practice. The omission in respect of checklist countersignatures did not harm the integrity of the process or harm the interests of students. Students confirmed that they had received a positive and supportive experience through the admissions process and agreed that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive. Staff demonstrate their understanding of roles and responsibilities within the admissions and recruitment of students and are appropriately skilled and supported through staff training. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.</p>
Q2	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.	Met	High	<p>The review team concludes that WIC delivers high-quality courses. WIC does not currently design programmes but has approval procedures in place to identify the programmes it wants to deliver in the future with consideration and oversight through its deliberative committee structure. WIC has a credible and robust approach in delivering high-quality courses through adhering to LTU's academic regulations and following its own procedures for teaching and learning, and has robust and credible plans in place for the monitoring of programmes. The approved course documentation indicates that the teaching, learning and assessment design enables students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. Staff collectively demonstrated sound knowledge and experience of programme and assessment delivery and were able to articulate the concept of 'high-quality'. With limited learning experience so far at WIC, students could not confirm that their courses would be of high quality but</p>

				were satisfied with their experience so far. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.
Q3	The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High	WIC has sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience for the two foundation programmes it delivers on behalf of LTU. Although the review of CVs demonstrated that some staff on the Health and Social Care programme did not have relevant teaching and work experience, this was mitigated by the foundation year content of this programme being generic and not subject specific, and with acknowledged future recruitment requirements for the 2021 cohort of the Health and Social Care programme. Staff met by the review team have been recruited, appointed, inducted and supported according to WIC's policies and the observations of teaching and learning indicate that teaching staff are appropriately qualified and skilled. Based on their limited learning experience in WIC so far, the students were positive about their academic staff. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.
Q4	The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	Moderate	The review team concludes that WIC has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The review team found that while WIC's plans for facilities and learning resources are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes to students, this is not the case for student support services. However, this is mitigated by the scale of the provision and that current student support mechanisms are sufficient to deliver a high-quality academic experience for its first cohort. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities, including that of offering

				<p>pastoral and careers support. At the time of the visit, paper-based texts were on order but not yet available and the library resources were scheduled to be relocated to a different floor, but there was evidence through observations, documentation and discussion to demonstrate that WIC had sufficient resources for the start of the delivery for the programmes. Therefore, on balance, the review team concludes that this Core practice is met.</p>
Q5	<p>The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.</p>	Met	High	<p>The review team concludes that WIC will actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. This is because WIC has robust and evidence-based approaches and plans for engaging students individually and collectively, with a range of formal policies and strategies, quality assurance and governance processes and evaluation mechanisms as well as informal approaches. WIC has a comprehensive plan in place for student representatives and training for the role. The mechanisms for students to engage individually and collectively through informal and formal arrangements are outlined in the Student Engagement Policy. WIC's plans to consider and feed back to students were credible and robust. WIC was able to demonstrate its understanding and experience of ongoing responses to student feedback through providing examples from further education programmes. However, due to the stage in the programme delivery there was no available evidence to assess the effectiveness of the impact of the approach or outcomes. Similarly, although the review team met students who had only very recently enrolled on the programmes and although their feedback was very positive in terms of their experience so far, they did not have any direct experience of directly participating and</p>



				engaging in these processes and no student representatives had been appointed. However, the review team concludes that this Core practice is met.
Q6	The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.	Met	High	The review team concludes that WIC has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to students. Its plans to develop fair, transparent and accessible complaints and appeals procedures are credible and robust and the procedures for handling complaints and appeals are definitive, fair and transparent and will deliver timely outcomes. Each stage of the complaints and the appeals process is clearly outlined, with defined responsibilities and timelines. Information for students on the procedures for handling complaints and appeals is clear and accessible through the student portal and initially provided to students through induction. Reference to complaints is also displayed on College noticeboards to raise awareness. Senior, academic and professional support staff understand WIC's and their own role in ensuring that the first stages of appeals and complaints are processed fairly, transparently and in a timely manner in accordance with LTU regulations. Plans are in place to monitor all complaints and appeals through the committee structure. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.
Q8	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.	Met	High	The review team concludes that WIC works in partnership with LTU to deliver its higher education provision and has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them. The partnership agreement is clear, comprehensive and up to date and reflects WIC's policies for the management of the partnership. Staff

				from both WIC and LTU understand their respective responsibilities for quality and the LTU Link Tutor will continue to be present on a weekly basis indefinitely, to provide continuity of support. Working in partnership with LTU, WIC has robust and credible plans to ensure a high-quality academic experience. WIC has plans in place to monitor all higher education provision to ensure that a high-quality academic experience is assured and has comprehensive plans in place to manage future work placements. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.
Q9	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Met	High	The review team concludes that WIC supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. While there was no assessed student work, LTU's Handbook of Assessment Guide and WIC's Assessment Policy provides a framework to ensure that staff provide all students with comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback. Staff understand WIC's approach and their role within it for supporting students in achieving successful academic and professional outcomes through the personal tutor system, Individual Learning Plans, and putting in place plans for students at risk. The review team found that the current approach, which includes identifying students' individual needs and considering employability in its higher education curriculum, facilitates successful academic and professional outcomes. WIC's plans to support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes are comprehensive, robust and credible. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

## About this report

This is a report detailing the outcomes of the Quality and Standards Review for providers applying to register with the Office for Students (OfS), conducted by QAA in January 2020, for Waltham International College Limited.

A Quality and Standards Review (QSR) is a method of review QAA uses to provide OfS with evidence about whether new providers applying to be on the OfS Register meet the Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code), based on evidence reviewed by expert assessors. This report is structured to outline the review team's decisions about the providers' ability to meet the Core practices through detailing the key pieces of evidence scrutinised and linking that evidence to the judgements made.

The team for this review was:

Name: Rong Huang  
Institution: University of Plymouth  
Role in review team: Subject specialist (Business Management)

Name: Diane Rainsbury  
Institution: Istituto Marangoni  
Role in review team: Institutional reviewer

The QAA Officer for the review was: Ms Siobhain O'Mahony.

The size and composition of this review team is in line with published guidance and, as such, is comprised of experts with significant experience and expertise across the higher education sector. The team included members with experience of a similar provider to the institution, knowledge of the academic awards offered and included academics with expertise in subject areas relevant to the provider's provision. Collectively, the team had experience of the management and delivery of higher education programmes from academic and professional services perspectives, included members with regulatory and investigative experience, and had at least one member able to represent the interests of students. The team included at least one senior academic leader qualified to doctoral level. Details of team members were shared with the provider prior to the review to identify and resolve any possible conflicts of interest.

## About Waltham International College Limited

Waltham International College (WIC) is an alternative provider offering a range of further education programmes. It has been based in Barking, East London, since 2014. WIC had previously delivered higher education courses from 2014 until 2018 but at the start of the Quality and Standards Review process did not have any agreements to deliver higher education courses or have any higher education students. A month before the review visit, WIC confirmed that it had finalised and signed an agreement with Leeds Trinity University (LTU) to deliver two franchised four-year courses: BA (Hons) with Foundation Year in Business and BSc (Hons) with Foundation Year in Health and Social Care. At that time, WIC had enrolled 143 full-time students: 112 on the Business programme and 31 on the Health and Social Care programme. There are no part-time students. All students have been recruited to the foundation year.

WIC's governance structure is overseen by the Board of Governors. WIC's Academic Board, which is responsible for the academic monitoring and decision-making of the provision, reports to the Board of Governors. It has oversight of the Assessment Board, the Academic

Management Committee, the Employability Committee, the Complaints Panel and the Student Staff Liaison Committee. An Operations Management Committee feeds into the Board of Governors and its remit is overseeing facilities, resources and student support services. The Academic Board and Operations Management Committee work together to ensure that WIC is sufficiently resourced to deliver its programmes.

## How the review was conducted

The review was conducted according to the process set out in [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

When undertaking a QSR, all 13 of the Core practices are considered by the review team. However, for this review it was clear that the provider does not offer a research degree programme. Therefore, the review team did not consider Q7 (where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments).

To form its judgements about the provider's ability to meet the Core practices, the review team considered a range of evidence that was submitted prior to the review visit and evidence gathered at the review visit itself. To ensure that the review team focused on the principles embedded in the Core practices, and that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews, the team used Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers to construct this report and detail the key pieces of evidence seen. Annex 4 expects that review teams will sample certain types of key evidence using a combination of representative sampling, risk-based sampling and randomised sampling. In this review, the review team sampled the following areas for evidence for the reasons given below:

- a random selection of 40 admissions records were selected out of 143 records of students recruited in January 2020 across both programmes
- a representative sample of nine academic and professional staff recruitment records were chosen across the two programmes.

At the time of the initial submission, WIC submitted evidence relating to its previous provision. This evidence was initially considered by the review team and then excluded shortly before the review visit when WIC confirmed that it was delivering new and different provision. WIC subsequently submitted relevant course and partnership evidence pertinent to the new provision, and the following evidence was at that point considered irrelevant:

- approved course documents covering programme specifications, programme handbooks, module guides and approved course documents, external examiner/reviewer/verifier reports, and third-party endorsements.

In addition, some course documents associated with LTU provision had been submitted. However, as this documentation related to previous academic years rather than 2019-20, they too were not considered by the team. This included programme handbooks and associated module handbooks.

## Explanation of findings

### S1 The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks

1 To meet this Core practice a provider must ensure that threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks. The threshold standards for its qualifications must be articulated clearly and must be met, or exceeded, through the delivery of the qualification and the assessment of students.

2 The sector-recognised standards that are used in relation to this Core practice are those that apply in England, as defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS regulatory framework. That is, those set out in Table 1, in paragraphs 4.10, 4.12, 4.15, 4.17, 4.18, in paragraphs 6.13-6.18 and in the Table in Annex C, in the version of [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) (FHEQ) published in October 2014. These sector-recognised standards represent the threshold academic standards for each level of the FHEQ and the minimum volumes of credit typically associated with qualifications at each level.

3 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

#### The evidence the team considered

4 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Waltham International College (WIC) Governance and Strategy document
- b WIC HE Structure Roles and Responsibilities
- c WIC Strategic Plan for Higher Education
- d WIC Quality Improvement Plan
- e WIC Quality Management and Assurance Policy
- f WIC Teaching and Learning Strategy
- g WIC Programme Approval, Modification and Cessation Policy
- h WIC Assessment Policy
- i WIC Academic Regulations
- j WIC Higher Education Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- k WIC Summative Feedback Sheet
- l WIC External verification/annual management review report tracking and action plan
- m Memorandum of Agreement between Leeds Trinity University (LTU) and WIC concerning an academic partnership, December 2019
- n WIC Action Plan: preparation for initial student intake January 2020
- o LTU Programme of Briefings for WIC staff, December 2019

p	LTU Taught Programme Academic Regulations, 2019/20
q	LTU Assessment Outcomes, Progression and Award Handbook 2019/20
r	LTU Handbook on Assessment Practice - Guide for Staff, July 2019
s	LTU Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedure, August 2019
t	LTU Student Academic and Professional Misconduct Policy and Procedure, July 2018
u	LTU and WIC Programme Handbook for Business and Health and Social Care Foundation Year students
v	LTU/WIC Module Guide for Foundation Year, Introduction to Business Operations and Management; Academic Skills and Studying with Confidence; Being Healthy in the Modern World; Starting a Business and Fundamentals of Marketing; Introduction to Effective Caring
w	WIC Programme/Module Proposal Forms, Business and Management, September 2019 and Health and Social Care, September 2019
x	WIC Approval Event Outcomes
y	WIC and LTU responsibilities checklist
z	LTU programme specifications for the LTU BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care; BA (Hons) Business and Management; BA (Hons) with Foundation Year in Business; BSc (Hons) with Foundation Year in Health and Social Care
aa	LTU Collaboration Approval Report (October 2019)
bb	LTU Module Descriptors, Introduction to Business Operations and Management (Core); Starting a Business and Fundamentals of Marketing (Core), Academic Skills and studying with confidence, Being Healthy in the Modern World; Introduction to Effective Caring; Project
cc	Meeting with senior staff
dd	Meeting with academic and professional support staff.

5 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- third-party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at WIC
- external examiner reports and assessed student work are not yet available.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

6 As WIC has only recently started delivering programmes, no sampling of evidence in relation to this Core practice was undertaken.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

7 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

8 To identify the higher education provision delivered in collaboration with LTU, and WIC's responsibilities for ensuring that the provision it delivers meets sector-recognised standards consistent with relevant national qualifications' frameworks, the team considered the Memorandum of Agreement, LTU's Handbook on Assessment Practice - Guide for Staff for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Programmes (and Credits), July 2019, WIC's programme/module proposal documentation for Business and Management, September

2019 and Health and Social Care, September 2019, WIC and LTU responsibilities checklist, an LTU collaboration approval outcomes paper and a report relating to the approval of franchise delivery of a BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care with Foundation Year in Health and Social Care; a BA (Hons) Business and Management with Foundation Year in Business; a BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care; and a BA (Hons) Business and Management, October 2019.

9 To test the robustness of WIC's plans for ensuring that sector-recognised standards are maintained, the team reviewed the higher education governance and management structural arrangements (including committee terms of reference and membership details) WIC has put in place, the higher education strategic plan for the period 2018 to 2023, the Quality Improvement Plan, Quality Management and Assurance Policy, Teaching and Learning Strategy, Programme Approval, Modification and Cessation Policy, Assessment Policy, Academic Regulations, Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, Summative Feedback Sheet, an external verification/ annual management review report tracking and action plan, an action plan in preparation for an initial student intake in January 2020, a one-day programme of briefings by LTU staff for WIC staff, December 2019, and WIC's programme/module proposal documentation for Business and Management, September 2019 and Health and Social Care, September 2019.

10 To verify that specified sector-recognised standards are consistent with relevant national qualifications' framework, the team considered approved course documentation, including LTU's programme specifications for the BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care, BA (Hons) Business and Management, BA (Hons) with Foundation Year in Business and the BSc (Hons) with Foundation Year in Health and Social Care, LTU's module descriptors for Introduction to Business Operations and Management (Core), Starting a Business and Fundamentals of Marketing (Core), Academic Skills and studying with confidence, Being Healthy in the Modern World, Introduction to Effective Caring, Project, WIC Handbook for Foundation Year Programmes 2019/20 and WIC foundation year module guides for Introduction to Business Operations and Management, Academic skills and studying with confidence, Being Healthy in the Modern World, Starting a Business and Fundamentals of Marketing and Introduction to Effective Caring.

11 The team met senior managers, and academic and professional staff to test that staff understand and apply WIC's approach to maintaining sector-recognised standards.

### **What the evidence shows**

12 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

13 WIC's programme/module proposal documentation for Business and Management, September 2019 and Health and Social Care, September 2019 relating to the planned franchise arrangements with LTU were approved by WIC's Academic Board and the Board of Governors in September 2019. In October 2019 LTU considered the appropriateness of WIC to deliver a BA (Hons) Business and Management with Foundation Year in Business; a BA (Hons) Business and Management; a BA (Hons) Health and Social Care with Foundation Year in Health and Social Care; and a BA (Hons) Health and Social Care programmes awarded by LTU as part of a franchise agreement. Subject to conditions, which have been met, the partnership was approved for five years with effect from 2019-20 and franchise arrangements relating to the foundation year provision in Business and Management and in Health and Social Care were approved for initial delivery in January 2020. Franchise arrangements were approved for the Level 4 entry to the BA (Hons) Business and Management and the BA (Hons) Health and Social Care from January 2021.

14 The approval event report included discussion of WIC's approach to teaching, learning and assessment and noted that training would be provided for College staff. This training, which included a briefing by LTU staff on the foundation year assessment schedule and regulations for 2019-20, took place in December 2019. University handbooks on assessment outcomes, progression and award, mitigating circumstances policy and procedure and student academic and professional misconduct policy and procedure make clear LTU's regulatory framework for assessment. LTU also provides guidance on assessment practice in the form of LTU's Handbook on Assessment Practice Guide for Staff, July 2019 which outlines the principles, processes, rules and conventions relating to assessment, serving as a reference guide for LTU's expectations and a guide for good practice in assessment.

15 The Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between LTU and WIC and the responsibilities checklist make it clear that LTU is the awarding body with ultimate responsibility for ensuring that sector-recognised standards are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks. LTU is responsible for programme development, approval, modification, setting assessments and monitoring of the delivery of its provision. College staff conduct first marking of student work and LTU is responsible for working with WIC to establish standardised marking expectations. The MoA stipulates LTU's academic regulations, policies and procedures that apply to the delivery of the two programmes currently offered at WIC. LTU's clear and comprehensive academic regulations to support standards include its award framework which references the FHEQ and provides information on assessment procedures.

16 The higher education governance and management structural arrangements, including terms of reference and membership details, and the higher education strategic plan for the period 2018 to 2023 reflect internal reorganisation of WIC in September 2018 and the separation of higher education and further education provision. The first Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) was reviewed by WIC's Academic Board and approved by the Board of Governors in September 2019. The Plan comprises five quality improvement themes (Effective governance; Student-centred; Academic excellence; Well designed and inclusive programmes; and Employability and student outcomes). The Academic Board, chaired by the Head of Higher Education, is responsible for higher education policy development and policies are subject to continual review.

17 A Quality Management and Assurance Policy, a Teaching and Learning Strategy, Academic Regulations and a Higher Education Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Review (AMER) Policy were reviewed by the Higher Education Academic Board and approved by the Board of Governors in September 2019. The Quality Management and Assurance Policy states that quarterly, half yearly and annual monitoring takes place with the Academic Board and Board of Governors receiving reports from an independent external adviser responsible for quality assurance. The AMER Policy indicates that continuous monitoring and evaluation of programmes is a core activity that underpins WIC's quality assurance and enhancement processes and culminates in the higher education AMER process conducted in July to August and a report. This activity is intended to ensure that academic standards meet national qualifications' frameworks requirements and that qualifications awarded hold their value over time in line with sector-recognised standards. Other policies that apply to higher education include the Programme Approval, Modification and Cessation Policy introduced in March 2017, with the Academic Board approving changes to reflect the new College structure and programme characteristics requirements to ensure alignment with the FHEQ in December 2018, and the Assessment Policy, also introduced in March 2017, and most recently reviewed by the Academic Board and approved by the Board of Governors in September 2019.



18 In addition to the policies mentioned above, WIC uses a summative feedback sheet indicating the strengths and limitations of student performance and suggested improvements providing guidance to students on how they have met learning outcomes and an external verification/annual management review report tracking and action plan to enable it to monitor its performance against external expectations. Further to discussion relating to the franchise agreement with LTU, a joint action plan in preparation for an initial student intake in January 2020 was produced and LTU staff have provided a one-day series of briefings on LTU's services, functions and the foundation year schedule and regulations for College staff, December 2019, to ensure a shared understanding of LTU's requirements. The team found that WIC's plans for maintaining sector-recognised standards through partnership working are robust and credible.

19 The intended learning outcomes listed in LTU's Health and Social Care and Business and Management programme specifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications' frameworks. The LTU and WIC Programme Handbook for Business and Health and Social Care Foundation Year students sets expectations for students and provides details about support available for students; related module descriptors provide information about credit values, intended learning outcomes, the nature of assessment and assessment outcomes. WIC's module handbooks set out the learning outcomes, learning and teaching strategies, and programme schedule, and include information on assessment, assessment criteria and resources. LTU is responsible for providing all current programme definitive documents to WIC to be used within a WIC context. These documents confirm that the sector-recognised standards described in definitive programme and module documents are consistent with relevant national qualifications frameworks.

20 Staff who met the team demonstrated a sound understanding of WIC's approach to maintaining sector-recognised standards and are fully committed to applying this. They articulated WIC's approaches to the mapping of learning outcomes against the relevant national quality frameworks, assessment setting and approval and the role of annual monitoring in maintaining standards. They confirmed that they had been fully briefed by University staff on University regulations, assessment requirements and expectations of programme delivery to ensure consistency of approach.

## **Conclusions**

21 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

22 From the evidence seen, the team considers that the standards set for WIC's courses are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of OfS's regulatory framework. Based on the evidence provided, the team also considers that standards described in the approved programme documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and the use and implementation of LTU's clear and comprehensive regulations and policies should ensure that standards are maintained appropriately.

23 The team considers that, based on the evidence scrutinised, the standards that will be achieved by WIC's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of OfS's regulatory framework. The team found that staff fully understand the approach taken by LTU and WIC to maintain these standards and the evidence seen by the team demonstrates that staff are committed to implementing this

approach. Therefore, based on its scrutiny of the evidence provided, the review team concludes that this Core practice is met.

24 The team formed the view that, although it did not have access to evidence of external examiner/verifier reports, third-party endorsements, and assessed student work, the Core practice is met on the following basis. The franchise arrangements in place and the responsibilities of LTU and WIC are such that credit and qualifications will only be awarded where the relevant sector-recognised standards have been met. WIC and LTU have undertaken preparatory work to ensure that staff understand and apply LTU's approach to maintaining the standards that have been set by LTU. WIC's plans for maintaining sector-recognised standards are robust and credible and fully understood by staff. WIC is developing its academic regulations and frameworks to support the maintenance of academic standards at the relevant sector-recognised level and the franchise arrangement ensures the security of standards set. The sector-recognised standards described in definitive course documentation are consistent with relevant national qualifications frameworks and the course documentation provided by WIC is based on that of LTU.

25 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of external examiner reports, third-party endorsements, and assessed student work, the evidence described in Annex 4 of the QSR evidence matrix. However, WIC has sufficient evidence of plans which are deemed by the team to be robust and credible and the team considers that the implementation of those plans will result in the intended outcome. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **S2 The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers**

26 This Core practice expects that the provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

27 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

28 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The *Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students* includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a WIC Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2018-23
- b WIC Teaching and Learning Strategy
- c WIC Assessment Policy
- d WIC Summative feedback form
- e Memorandum of Agreement with Leeds Trinity University including the delivery under franchise of foundation year and undergraduate programmes in Business and Management and in Health and Social Care
- f WIC Handbook for Foundation Year Programmes
- g Module Guides for Foundation Year, Introduction to Business Operations and Management; Academic Skills and Studying with Confidence; Being Healthy in the Modern World; Starting a Business and Fundamentals of Marketing; Introduction to Effective Caring
- h WIC and LTU responsibilities checklist
- i LTU programme specifications for the LTU BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care; BA (Hons) Business and Management; BA (Hons) with Foundation Year in Business; and the BSc (Hons) with Foundation Year in Health and Social Care
- j Report relating to the approval of franchise delivery of a BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care with Foundation Year in Health and Social Care; a BA (Hons) Business and Management with Foundation Year in Business; a BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care; and a BA (Hons) Business and Management, October 2019
- k Meeting with senior staff
- l Meeting with students
- m Meeting with academic staff
- n Meeting with LTU Link Tutor.

29 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- third-party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at WIC
- external examiner reports and assessed student work are not yet available.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

30 As WIC has only recently started delivering programmes no sampling of evidence in relation to this Core practice was undertaken.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

31 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

32 To identify WIC's approach for achieving standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers for those programmes approved under the franchise agreement with LTU (foundation year and undergraduate programme in Business and Management; and foundation year and undergraduate programme in Health and Social Care), the team considered WIC's assessment policy, a summative feedback form, a responsibilities checklist, and the report relating to the approval of franchise delivery of a BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care with Foundation Year in Health and Social Care; a BA (Hons) Business and Management with Foundation Year in Business; a BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care; and a BA (Hons) Business and Management, October 2019.

33 To test the robustness of WIC's plans for maintaining comparable standards and to ensure that plans are credible and evidence-based, the team considered the WIC Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2018-23, the Teaching and Learning Strategy and Assessment Policy.

34 To test that standards beyond the threshold are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers, the team reviewed the WIC Handbook for Foundation Year Programmes, Module Guides for Foundation Year, Introduction to Business Operations and Management; Academic Skills and Studying with Confidence; Being Healthy in the Modern World; Starting a Business and Fundamentals of Marketing; Introduction to Effective Caring and LTU programme specifications for the LTU BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care; BA (Hons) Business and Management; BA (Hons) with Foundation Year in Business; and the BSc (Hons) with Foundation Year in Health and Social Care.

35 The team met 10 students, including eight students on the Business and Management foundation year and two students on the Health and Social Care foundation year, to assess whether they understand what is required of them to reach standards beyond the threshold.

36 The team met three academic staff members involved in assessment (two teaching on the Business and Management foundation year and one staff member teaching on the Health and Social Care foundation year) to test that staff understand and apply WIC's approach to maintaining comparable standards.

### **What the evidence shows**

37 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

38 While LTU sets the standards for WIC's two higher education programmes, WIC has developed a range of policies and procedures to enable it to support the maintenance of academic standards. In the collaboration with LTU, WIC is responsible for providing formative and summative feedback to students on their assessments. WIC's assessment policy indicates that feedback to students should identify the strengths and weaknesses of their assessed work and that comments should be provided on the level of attainment for each learning outcome. This is reinforced in the summative assignment feedback form used by WIC, which states that the feedback should enable students to understand what they can do to improve to meet higher level grading criteria. The report of the partnership approval event includes discussion of the support provided to students to help them achieve standards beyond the threshold level, including induction, the early identification of any additional support needs, the allocation of a mentor/personal tutor, adapting to different learning styles and developing students' understanding of what is required of them by working through programme specifications and learning outcomes. The report noted that the level of support provided by WIC to its students moved from 'intense at the start to more hands-off as students progressed' and 'they expected to stretch the students beyond their comfort zone'.

39 The Strategic Plan for Higher Education sets out that WIC intends to expand its provision under new partnerships or through developing new programmes as a key part of its strategy. The Teaching and Learning Strategy includes principles, guidelines and strategies that should ensure students have opportunities to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. The strategy indicates that the Higher Education Academic Board will make use of external expertise in teaching and learning from time to time to ensure that WIC is maintaining academic standards at a threshold level and beyond. One of the aims of the Assessment Policy is to confirm that students awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers. In helping to achieve this aim, the policy states that assessment briefs must provide opportunities for students to cover all learning outcomes and assessment criteria, including guidelines for achieving higher grades. The policy identifies the means by which assessment processes are quality assured, including standardisation, internal and external verification, double marking and staff development and training. In the case of the collaboration with LTU, LTU sets all the assessments and conducts all second marking/moderation. Noting WIC's self-acknowledged lack of track record in the provision of higher education and the self-evaluation it has undertaken to date to identify strengths and areas for development as part of its strategic planning, the team considers that WIC's plans for maintaining comparable standards beyond the threshold level are evidence-based and, underpinned by LTU's regulatory and assessment framework, the plans are robust and credible.

40 The WIC Handbook for Foundation Year Programmes includes general information about the programmes, including a guide to assessment at LTU, marking criteria, assessment procedures and regulations, the procedure for handling assignments, and academic writing. The handbook also refers students to module handbooks for further assessment information for each module. LTU's programme specifications list the learning outcomes successful students are expected to demonstrate and indicate opportunities available to students to tailor their studies and specialise, as appropriate. Assessment of the foundation year is based on assessment against four criteria leading to a pass/fail judgement.

41 Students who met the team demonstrated awareness of the intended learning outcomes for the foundation programmes. They confirmed that the foundation year assessment would be based on a pass/fail judgement and this was made clear in the foundation year programme handbook.

42 Senior, academic and profession support staff who met the team demonstrated understanding of LTU's responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and the contribution of College staff to the maintenance of standards. They spoke of the work undertaken to maintain standards, including the process of standardisation of teaching and marking addressed in the Teaching and Learning Strategy. College staff indicated that they considered that separate assignment briefs for students at WIC would be helpful. The approval event report noted the role of LTU's Link Tutor in ensuring consistency of expectations for students and staff on the same programmes taught at different locations. The Link Tutor confirmed that, while there is scope for some contextualisation of teaching, LTU sets the assessments and WIC may not make changes to these.

## **Conclusions**

43 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

44 The review team, based on the evidence, determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on WIC's courses are reasonably comparable with those set by other UK providers. The review team considered that the standards described in the approved programme documentation and in academic regulations and policies should ensure that such standards are maintained appropriately.

45 Therefore, the review team concludes, based on the evidence described above, that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers and this Core practice is met.

46 WIC started to deliver foundation year programmes in January 2020. These programmes lead to pass/fail judgements but formative and summative feedback provided by WIC is designed to help students to understand how they can improve their work. The team was not able to consider assessed student work to demonstrate that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the relevant standards have been met and there are no external examiner or third-party reports to confirm that standards beyond the threshold level are reasonably comparable with those in other UK providers and that credit and qualifications are awarded only where those standards have been met. However, the higher education provision currently offered by WIC leads to awards of LTU, which is responsible for the standards achieved to ensure these are comparable with those of other UK providers. To that end, the collaboration between WIC and LTU is underpinned by LTU's comprehensive regulatory and assessment framework. The plans in place to ensure that comparable standards are set and maintained are robust and credible because WIC's collaboration with LTU enable WIC and its students to benefit from the experience of LTU which sets the standards for the qualifications, while WIC is responsible for delivering the franchised programmes in accordance with LTU's regulatory and assessment requirements. Students who met the team showed that they understand the importance of demonstrating that they meet learning outcomes while also being aware that the foundation year assessment is based on a pass/fail judgement. Overall, staff who met the team demonstrated understanding of LTU's responsibilities for setting standards and WIC's approach to maintaining standards. The oversight provided by LTU should ensure comparability of standards.

47 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of external examiner reports, students' views, assessed students' work, and third-party endorsements, the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. WIC has sufficient evidence of plans which are deemed by the team to be robust and credible and the team considers that the implementation of those plans will result in the intended outcome. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

### **S3 Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them**

48 This Core practice expects that where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

49 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

#### **The evidence the team considered**

50 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Higher Education Organisational Structures and Job Descriptions document
- b College Wide Quality Improvement Plan
- c WIC Quality management and Assurance Policy
- d Assessment Policy
- e WIC's Academic Regulations
- f WIC Work Placement Policy
- g WIC Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- h Resourcing Policy
- i Memorandum of Agreement with Leeds Trinity University
- j Programme of briefings
- k University and College Action Plan
- l LTU Taught Programme Academic Regulations 2019/20
- m WIC Foundation Year Programmes Handbook
- n LTU Approval report and subsequent conditions
- o Responsibilities checklist
- p Meeting with senior staff
- q Meeting with students
- r Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- s Meeting with LTU Link Tutor.

51 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- third-party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at WIC
- external examiner reports and assessed student work are not yet available.



## **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

52 As WIC has only recently started delivering programmes no sampling of evidence in relation to this Core practice was undertaken.

## **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

53 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

54 To test WIC's approach to ensuring that the standards of the awards it delivers on behalf of LTU are credible and secure, the review team considered the Memorandum of Agreement, the approval report and subsequent conditions, WIC's Handbook for LTU Foundation Year programmes, LTU Taught Programme Academic Regulations 2019-20, WIC's Academic Regulations, the Higher Education Organisational Structures and Job Descriptions document, the Resources Policy, an action plan in preparation for an initial student intake in January 2020 and a programme of briefings involving staff of WIC and LTU.

55 To assess whether WIC has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for securing standards in partnership work, the review team considered LTU and College Action Plan and WIC's own plans and policies, including the College Wide Quality Improvement Plan, Quality Management and Assurance Policy, Assessment Policy, Academic Regulations, Work Placement Policy and Monitoring and Evaluation Policy.

56 The team met senior academic and professional staff and the LTU Link Tutor to test that staff understand their responsibilities in securing standards in partnership with LTU.

## **What the evidence shows**

57 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

58 WIC works within the Memorandum of Agreement with LTU which is comprehensive and sets out in detail the respective responsibilities of each institution, including admissions, assessment setting, marking and moderation, appeals and complaints. Within this context, LTU retains responsibility for programme design and development, assessment setting, second marking and admissions decisions. WIC also follows LTU's Academic Regulations and WIC's Programme handbook for LTU Foundation Year Programmes reflects LTU's requirements and includes a guide to assessment at LTU, the generic descriptors to inform the marking criteria and the assessment procedures and regulations to be applied. A University Link Tutor provides ongoing academic support to WIC to ensure that staff understand their responsibilities for academic standards.

59 Since the agreement was signed in December 2019, both parties have continued to work extensively to facilitate early programme commencement in January 2020. LTU's approval report and subsequent conditions include the development of a University and College Action Plan to address operational requirements before delivery. The action plan, which has been monitored by both LTU and WIC, includes, through a LTU Link Tutor, meetings and training with staff to ensure that they understand LTU's regulatory and operational requirements. The team was told that the Link Tutor has been, and will continue to be, present on a weekly basis to provide continuity of support at an operational and developmental level. The team found that WIC has engaged fully with LTU's requirements

as set out in the Memorandum of Agreement, the responsibilities checklist and the LTU Approval report and met the conditions of approval. The respective obligations of both parties to the partnership agreement ensure that the standards of LTU's awards delivered by WIC are credible and secure.

60 WIC's Higher Education Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Review Policy complements LTU's Academic Regulations and is comprehensive in its approach to annual and periodic review, and the implementation of subsequent actions will be compiled into a Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan to be signed off by the Board of Governors. The team considers that WIC's approach for securing standards in partnership work, reflected in its strategic planning approach and policies introduced, are credible, robust and evidence-based.

61 Senior and academic and professional support staff who met the team demonstrated a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for programme delivery and resourcing, pastoral and academic welfare, conducting assessments, first marking, annual monitoring and first stage complaints and appeals. They also understood LTU's responsibilities for programme design, admissions, assessment setting and moderation. Senior and academic and professional support staff confirmed that a high level of control was being maintained by LTU and spoke positively about the support provided by, and their engagement with, LTU which has included staff development and induction activity and ongoing contact through link tutors. Responsibility for setting assessments resides with LTU. Should there be a requirement to change an assessment, there would need to be discussion of the changes proposed and rationale for these, with any amendments requiring external examiner approval. The team formed the view that staff involved in the partnership arrangement understand and will discharge effectively their respective responsibilities for academic standards.

## **Conclusions**

62 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

63 The review team concludes that WIC has effective arrangements in place to ensure that the standards of LTU awards are credible and secure. WIC's plans to secure standards in the provision it delivers in partnership with LTU are robust and credible and contribute to the development of an effective working relationship with LTU to secure the standards LTU expects to be delivered under the partnership arrangement. WIC is working within LTU's regulatory framework and has also developed clear policies of its own for the management of the partnership and monitoring and review arrangements to ensure that award standards are credible and secure. The partnership agreement takes account of LTU's regulations and policies developed by WIC are aligned with LTU's requirements. The agreement is clear, comprehensive, and up to date. Although the agreement relating to the provision of the foundation year higher education programmes in Business and Management and in Health and Social Care is in its early stages, the team found that College and University staff understand their respective responsibilities for academic standards. This understanding is supported by the establishment of ongoing support from LTU to enable College staff to be clear about LTU's expectations to ensure that award standards are credible and secure. Therefore, the review team concludes that WIC meets this Core practice.

64 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of external examiner reports, assessed student work, and third-party endorsements, the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. However, WIC has sufficient evidence of plans which are deemed by the team to be robust and credible and the team considers that the implementation of those plans will result in the intended outcome. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **S4 The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent**

65 This Core practice expects that the provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.

66 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

67 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a WIC Higher Education Quality Improvement Plan
- b WIC Assessment Policy
- c WIC External Expertise Policy
- d WIC Higher Education Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Review Policy
- e WIC Foundation Year Programmes Handbook
- f WIC HE Structure Roles and responsibilities
- g Summative Feedback Form
- h Memorandum of Agreement with Leeds Trinity University including the delivery under franchise of foundation year and undergraduate programmes in Business and Management and in Health and Social Care)
- i WIC Action Plan: preparation for initial student intake January 2020
- j Programme of briefings involving staff of WIC and LTU
- k LTU Taught Programme Academic Regulations 2019/20
- l LTU Assessment Practice Guide for Staff
- m WIC Foundation Year Programmes Handbook
- n LTU and WIC responsibilities checklist
- o LTU Programme Specifications for the BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care, BA (Hons) Business and Management, BA (Hons) with Foundation Year in Business and BSc (Hons) with Foundation Year in Health and Social Care
- p WIC Virtual Learning Environment
- q Meeting with senior staff
- r Meeting with students
- s Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- t Meeting with LTU Link Tutor.

68 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- third-party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at WIC
- external examiner reports and assessed student work are not yet available.

## **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

69 As WIC has only recently started delivering programmes no sampling of evidence in relation to this Core practice was undertaken.

## **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

70 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

71 To identify how external experts are used in maintaining academic standards, and how assessment and classification processes operate, the team considered the Memorandum of Agreement with LTU, including the delivery under franchise of foundation year and undergraduate programmes in Business and Management and in Health and Social Care, LTU AND WIC responsibilities checklist, WIC's External Expertise Policy, and the WIC Higher Education Annual Monitoring, WIC HE Structure Roles and Responsibilities and the Evaluation Review Policy.

72 To assess whether plans for using external expertise in maintaining academic standards and plans for assessment and classification processes are credible, robust and evidence-based, the team considered LTU Taught Programme Academic Regulations 2019/20, University Handbook on Assessment Practice Guide for Staff and met senior and academic and professional support staff and the LTU Link Tutor.

73 To assess the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes for the higher education programmes currently delivered by WIC (the BA (Hons) with Foundation Year in Business and the BSc (Hons) with Foundation Year in Health Care), the team reviewed the WIC Foundation Year Programmes Handbook, LTU's programme specifications for these programmes and the programme specifications for the BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care and the BA (Hons) Business and Management, WIC's summative feedback form and WIC's virtual learning environment (VLE).

74 The team met senior managers, academic and professional services staff and LTU Link Tutor to test staff understanding of the requirements for the use of external expertise, and the assessment and classification processes.

75 To identify how they regard the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes, the review team met with 10 students. Among them, eight students were from the Business and Management programme and two from the Health and Social Care programme.

76 The team met recently enrolled students to identify how they regard the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes.

## **What the evidence shows**

77 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

78 Under the Memorandum of Agreement between WIC and LTU, WIC delivers provision on behalf of LTU and LTU is responsible for setting and maintaining standards. LTU sets all assessments and conducts all second marking/moderation. LTU is responsible

for external examiner appointment and induction and for sharing external examiner reports with WIC. Since the programmes are in the early stages of delivery, WIC has yet to engage with any external examiners. As a partner college of LTU, WIC is required to send to LTU the achievement evidence in relation to each student and such supporting evidence as may be specified by LTU from time to time. LTU has also produced a handbook on assessment practice for staff delivering taught programmes, providing information on the formulation of assessment, modes of assessment, marking practices, assessment panels and the use of external expertise. The handbook has been written to reflect LTU's clear and comprehensive taught programme regulations 2019/20 that apply to the assessment of LTU's provision delivered by WIC, reflecting LTU's responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards of the programmes delivered by WIC.

79 WIC has developed an External Expertise Policy which came into effect from September 2019. The policy states that WIC seeks to ensure that it has in place processes for the engagement of external experts who can be called upon to provide objective, independent and impartial advice on course design, management, monitoring content, delivery and evaluation. External experts are expected to include individuals who have professional experience and knowledge to contribute to the periodic review of courses; an understanding of the UK higher education context; and who are involved in quality assurance processes and have expertise in partnership working. WIC has already appointed an external adviser to the Academic Board to advise on quality assurance and also expects to appoint external subject specialists to review academic and subject-specific course content.

80 WIC's Assessment Policy states that, from time to time, the Academic Board will involve external expertise in assessments to ensure that WIC is maintaining the threshold standards of programmes delivered on behalf of awarding partners and that threshold standards are enforced, particularly where professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB) requirements are to be met. Such experts may include staff members from partner organisations or specialists from PSRBs, for example. The Policy also indicates that the external adviser responsible for quality assurance also advises the Academic Board on the quality assurance of assessment practices and may undertake sampling of assessment instruments or student work to check that assessment standards are maintained.

81 WIC has also developed a Higher Education Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Review Policy, which also came into effect from September 2019. This policy is intended to inform action planning based on a range of information, including external stakeholder views and the higher education Quality Improvement Plan which is overseen by the external adviser on quality assurance and will be submitted to the Board of Governors for review and final approval. The team considers that WIC's approach to using external expertise in maintaining standards and plans for assessment and classification processes are credible, robust and evidence-based. This is because it is working in collaboration with LTU whose regulations apply to the higher education programmes WIC delivers on behalf of LTU and, alongside this relationship, WIC is developing or refining its own policies and procedures which include provision for external expertise to be used to inform internal development.

82 The team's review of approved course documentation in the form of the WIC Foundation Year Programmes Handbook, LTU's programme specifications for the BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care, BA (Hons) Business and Management, BA (Hons) with Foundation Year in Business and the BSc (Hons) with Foundation Year in Health and Social Care, WIC's summative feedback form and information on WIC's VLE confirmed that the assessment processes that apply to these programmes are reliable, fair and transparent.

83 From the team's meetings with senior, academic and professional support staff and with the LTU Link Tutor, it was evident that close working relationships had been established

and that staff development had been undertaken to ensure that College staff have a clear understanding of LTU's requirements and their role within the assessment process.

84 Students who met the team had only recently enrolled. They had had no direct experience of assessment and were therefore not in a position to comment on the reliability, fairness and transparency of assessment and classification processes.

## **Conclusions**

85 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

86 The review team concludes that WIC uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and inclusive. This is because WIC's plans for the use of external expertise in maintaining standards are sound and it is refining existing policies and developing new policies, which include the use of external expertise in maintaining academic standards. Staff understand the requirements for the use of external expertise provided by LTU and the close working relationships established between WIC and University staff members, in addition to training and information provided by LTU, have helped to support staff understanding of LTU's assessment processes. The responsibilities of WIC and LTU, as defined in the Memorandum of Agreement, make it clear that LTU's regulations apply to the higher education programmes delivered by WIC. These are clear and comprehensive and assessment processes are reliable, fair and transparent. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

87 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of external examiner reports, students' views, assessed students' work, and third-party endorsements, the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. However, the team noted the level and scope of LTU's regulatory oversight, coupled with WIC's policies to support the maintenance of standards and determined that WIC has sufficient evidence of plans which are deemed by the team to be robust and credible, and the team considers that the implementation of those plans will result in the intended outcome. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q1 The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system**

88 This Core practice expects that the provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.

89 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

90 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a WIC Student Recruitment and Admissions Policy
- b Memorandum of Agreement
- c Appeals Policy
- d University Appeals Policy and Complaints Procedure
- e Schedule of training
- f Staff training activities
- g College website
- h Programme Specifications
- i Quality Improvement Plan
- j University's Admissions Policy
- k HE Strategic Plan
- l Admissions records
- m Meeting with senior staff
- n Meeting with students
- o Meeting with academic and professional support staff.

91 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- arrangements with recruitment agents because WIC reported that it does not use recruitment agents.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

92 A random sample of 40 admission records constituting one third of the successful applicant files was considered to assess whether reliable, fair and inclusive admissions decisions were made for applicants sampled.



## **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

93 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

94 To identify WIC's policy relating to the recruitment, selection and admission of students; roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the admissions process; support for applicants; how WIC verifies applicants' entry qualifications; how WIC facilitates an inclusive admissions system; and how it handles complaints and appeals in respect to admissions, the review team considered WIC's Student Recruitment and Admissions and Recruitment Policy, Memorandum of Agreement, Appeals Policy, University Appeals Policy and Complaints Procedure schedule of training and staff training activities.

95 To assess whether WIC has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive, the team considered WIC's Admissions Policy, the Quality Improvement Plan, LTU's Admissions Policy, and HE Strategic Plan.

96 To verify that information for applicants is transparent, inclusive and fit for purpose, the review team considered WIC's website, programme specifications and met students who had recently been enrolled.

97 To identify WIC's approach to complaints and appeals within admissions the review team considered the Admissions Policy, the Appeals Policy and Complaints Procedure and spoke to senior staff.

98 To determine whether staff understand their responsibilities and are appropriately skilled and supported the review team considered the staff training schedule and activities and met senior staff and academic and professional staff.

99 To assess students' views about the admissions process the review team met with 10 students. Among them, eight students were from the Business and Management programme and two from the Health and Social Care programme.

## **What the evidence shows**

100 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

101 WIC's Student Recruitment, Selection and Admissions Policy is aligned and consistent with its delegated responsibilities and the terms of its recently agreed partnership and Memorandum of Agreement with LTU. WIC's responsibilities include the administration of its initial student recruitment and screening process prior to formal application to LTU. WIC operates the first internal stage of the admissions process, screening all applicants, verifying qualifications and formal interviewing, with all final decision-making residing with LTU.

102 WIC's own admissions processes make provision for applicants with additional needs and provide the necessary framework for ensuring that the process is inclusive and accessible to all students. WIC does this by asking students to self-declare at application and through considering reasonable adjustments. These are discussed at the interview stage.

103 WIC has a clear commitment to widening access and participation that forms an integral part of its ethos and underpins all aspects of its operation at both strategic and operational levels. This is confirmed in its Strategic Plan and Admissions Policy and senior staff confirmed that the majority of its students are from widening participation backgrounds. In accordance with WIC's own processes, a review will be undertaken annually by the Board of Governors to ensure the Equality and Diversity Policy appropriateness and to evaluate its impact. Any recognition of prior learning applications for the two higher education programmes are considered by LTU through the second stage process. Data collected at the application stage will be used to systematically monitor recruitment and admissions outcomes and inform developments. The review team found that WIC's admissions processes are fully inclusive and are fair because WIC has mechanisms to identify students' special requirements and admission to WIC is open for all. The review team also found that WIC has credible plans to monitor admissions data and processes going forward.

104 The stipulated admissions requirements and process are clearly set out on WIC's website and detail the entry requirements, details about the course and how to apply online through an application form. The review team found the information clear and easy to understand and follow. The programme specifications also contain clear information about the course and entry requirements. These findings were consistent with the views of students who had recently applied and enrolled on the programme. Students confirmed that the information and processes had been straightforward to access, and that staff were accessible if further help was needed. Therefore, the review team concluded that information for applicants is transparent, inclusive and fit for purpose as the information was available on the website and students felt well supported through the process.

105 WIC details how students can make a complaint or appeal against an application decision in its Admissions Policy, which is clear and provides a deadline of 15 working days for WIC to respond. LTU also has responsibility for complaints and appeals for admissions to WIC in the second stage where final decisions are made, as outlined in its Appeals Policy and Complaints Procedure. There have been no appeals or complaints raised during the recent recruitment and admissions cycle.

106 WIC's approach to admissions has been supported and underpinned by relevant staff development and training. Training is provided internally and by LTU, with the awarding body providing training to WIC admissions staff in December 2019 prior to student enrolment, as outlined in a schedule of training. The training was followed up by internal discussions and meetings at WIC around admissions processes, interviews and student induction which was confirmed by senior and academic and professional support staff and detailed in WIC's internal training schedule. This approach, supported by its policy and staff training, demonstrates that staff are given appropriate training. Senior, academic and professional services staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the Admissions Policy and processes and their role within it. For example, staff explained the different stages of the admissions process and where WIC had responsibility in the process. Academic and professional service staff also confirmed the training they had received both in relation to WIC and the requirements of LTU and of the ongoing oversight and close links with LTU, including the operational relationship with the LTU Link Tutor. They also confirmed that they had received information on how to address admissions appeals and/or complaints. From these discussions, the review team found that staff understand their role and are appropriately skilled and supported.

107 The admissions records the review team considered indicated that WIC's policies and responsibilities are followed meticulously, with just one minor omission where a checklist had not been countersigned. Formal records provided included comprehensive documentary evidence of all required information, including certified qualifications. Interview notes were collated and maintained for WIC's preliminary stage of the admissions process. These

records demonstrate that stage one of the admissions process is followed fully and consistently. Following completion of stage one, applicants are directed to LTU's application process accessed through the WIC website. The review team found that the admissions records demonstrated that WIC's policies are implemented in practice and that the minor omission did not harm the integrity of the procedure or the interests of applicants.

108 None of the students whom the team met indicated they had accessed additional support, although all spoke positively of their experience to date and the helpfulness of staff throughout the admissions and enrolment process. They confirmed that information was transparent, accessible and fit for purpose and agreed that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive.

## **Conclusions**

109 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

110 The team concludes that WIC has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system. Its policies and processes are aligned with LTU policies and regulations and these are applied consistently in practice as part of the initial screening of applicants prior to formal application to LTU. Information for applicants is transparent, accessible and fit for purpose. Admission requirements are clearly set out in programme documentation, are consistent with WIC's and LTU requirements and are clearly presented on the website. Information about how applicants can complain and appeal against decisions is clear and accessible and shared between WIC and LTU. WIC identifies students with special requirements through a standard process and has a clear aim to recruit students through widening participation. Admissions records demonstrate that WIC policies are implemented in practice. The omission in respect of checklist countersignatures did not harm the integrity of the process or harm the interests of students. Students confirmed that they had received a positive and supportive experience through the admissions process and agreed that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive. Staff demonstrated their understanding of roles and responsibilities within the admissions and recruitment of students and are appropriately skilled and supported through staff training. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

111 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix; therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## Q2 The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses

112 This Core practice expects that the provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.

113 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### The evidence the team considered

114 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Taught Programme Academic Regulations
- b Memorandum of Agreement
- c HE Strategic Plan
- d Teaching and Learning Strategy
- e Programme Approval, Modification and Cessation form, Governance document
- f Board of Governors Minutes
- g Module survey and programme evaluation templates
- h Observation of staff and peer observation templates
- i Standardised summative feedback form
- j Action Plan on External Verifier report
- k Staff CPD activities
- l HE Structure
- m Quality Management Assurance Policy
- n WIC Quality Improvement Plan
- o University validation event
- p Staff training activities
- q University Programme Handbooks
- r Work Placement Handbook
- s Work Placement templates
- t LTU programme specifications
- u LTU programme handbooks
- v LTU module descriptors
- w College programme handbook
- x Module handbooks
- y Two observations of teaching and learning to test whether the course delivery is high quality
- z Meeting with senior staff
- aa Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- bb Meeting with students
- cc Final meeting with senior staff.

115 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- third-party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at WIC
- external examiner reports, and students' views collected through internal and external surveys, module and course evaluations are not yet available.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

116 To test whether the course delivery is high quality, the review team undertook teaching observations of two different modules.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

117 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

118 To identify WIC's plans to designing high-quality courses, the review team considered the LTU Memorandum of Agreement, Taught Programme Academic Regulations, Programme Approval, Modification and Cessation form, Governance document, Board of Governors minutes, Academic Board minutes and Operational Management Committee minutes.

119 To identify WIC's approach to delivering high quality courses the review team considered the HE Strategic Plan, the Teaching and Learning Strategy, the Quality Management and Assurance Policy and LTU's Programme Handbooks.

120 To ascertain the credibility of WIC's plans for delivering high-quality programmes, the review team considered module survey and programme evaluation templates, observation of staff and peer observation templates, the standardised summative feedback form, Action Plan on External Verifier report, staff CPD activities, HE Structure, the current WIC Quality Improvement Plan, LTU validation event, staff training activities, the Work Placement Handbook and Work Placement templates.

121 To identify WIC's plans for the monitoring of high-quality programmes, the review team considered the HE Structure, the Quality Management Assurance Policy, module survey and programme evaluation templates, observation of staff and peer observation template, standardisation of process, Action Plan on External Verifier report, staff CPD activities, WIC Quality Improvement Plan University validation event documentation, staff training schedule and activities, University Programme Handbooks and met with University Academic Partnership Unit staff.

122 To test that all elements of the courses sampled are high quality and will enable students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes, the review team considered the approved programme documentation, including LTU programme specifications, LTU programme handbooks, LTU module descriptors, WIC programme handbook and WIC module handbooks.

123 To assess how College staff ensure courses are of high quality, the review team held meetings with the senior management team and academic and professional staff.

124 To identify their views of the quality of their courses, the review team met with 10 students. Among them, eight students were from the Business and Management programme and two from the Health and Social Care programme.

### **What the evidence shows**

125 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

126 WIC does not design the higher education courses that it delivers on behalf of LTU and relies on the agreement and Academic Regulations of LTU, who has designed both programmes. WIC has procedures for programme approvals or cessation as illustrated in its Programme Approval, Modification and Cessation form. Future programme design and delivery will be assessed at Academic Board and Operational Management Committee before they are ratified by the Board of Governors. Board of Governors, Academic Board and Operational Management Committee minutes showed consultation and comprehensive discussion about the proposed University partnership which considered the different stages of the development and consultation with students.

127 WIC's own approach to the management of the delivery of its higher education programmes is governed by its HE Strategic Plan where a key strategic aim is to 'only offer programmes that are well designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.' The Strategic Plan is developed and overseen by Academic Board and the Board of Governors. The management of the delivery of programmes is supported by WIC's Teaching and Learning Strategy which includes sections on Course Design and Delivery, Assessment, Learning and Teaching, and Monitoring and Evaluation. This document includes approaches to effective learning and teaching through the use of qualified academic staff, collaboration of staff through assessment standardisation meetings and encouraging active learning for students. The Strategy also includes WIC's approach to class observations. The Quality Management and Assurance Policy details that higher education modules will be reviewed annually and programmes review periodically, as required by LTU, to ensure the quality of the programmes. WIC will follow LTU's Programme Handbooks to ensure that the programmes are effectively assessed. Academic Board will have oversight of the programme's quality of delivery and monitoring. These arrangements are clear and comprehensive, and the review team formed the view that WIC's approach facilitates the delivery of high-quality courses.

128 WIC plans to monitor the delivery of high-quality courses through action taken on student feedback, observation of staff and peer observation, standardisation of process and staff continuing professional development (CPD) activities. The current WIC Quality Improvement Plan sets expectations and targets for ensuring that there is a high-quality student experience, and this will be monitored through student feedback. Following approval conditions from the LTU validation event, WIC organised, with LTU, a range of activities for staff development about the programmes. These were complemented by LTU Programme Handbooks which included guidance for assessment for staff. Furthermore, Academic Partnership Unit staff confirmed that the LTU Link Tutor was and would continue to be in WIC at least one day a week to guide WIC to deliver LTU programmes, and more tailored staff development would be provided to WIC by LTU. The review team found that there were plans to effectively monitor the courses which would contribute to the facilitation the delivery of high-quality courses.

129 The approved College programme and module handbooks provide the expectations and intended learning outcomes as set out by LTU's programme specifications, LTU programme handbooks and LTU module descriptors. The module handbooks developed by WIC are consistent with related University module descriptors and provide detailed information regarding teaching topics and student learning activities each week.

Assessments are developed to address intended learning outcomes of each module. Overall, the approved course documentation indicates that the teaching, learning and assessment design enables students to demonstrate the intended learning outcomes.

130 Staff who met the review team collectively demonstrated a sound knowledge and experience of programme and assessment delivery and were able to articulate the concept of 'high quality'. Staff also provided comprehensive explanations in relation to both academic and professional outcomes and how the provision was delivered in accordance to WIC's Quality Management and Assurance Policy and related Quality Improvement Plan.

131 As the observed teaching sessions were the first teaching sessions of the modules, the staff addressed module learning outcomes and classroom rules, actively engaging students. Related assessments were also introduced. Both sessions were well-paced and encouraged student interaction. The submitted lesson plans provided detailed teaching and learning arrangements for the duration and they were consistent with a standard teaching session in relation to theories, tutorials and student exercises.

132 The review team met with the students after their half-day learning experience and found they were satisfied with the experience so far. However, they acknowledged their experience with the course was so limited at the stage of the review visit that they could not confirm that their courses would be of high quality.

## **Conclusions**

133 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

134 The review team concludes that WIC delivers high-quality courses. WIC does not currently design programmes but has approval procedures in place to identify the programmes it wants to deliver in the future, with consideration and oversight through its deliberative committee structure. WIC has a credible and robust approach in delivering high-quality courses through adhering to LTU's academic regulations and following its own procedures for teaching and learning and has robust and credible plans in place for the monitoring of programmes. The approved course documentation indicates that the teaching, learning and assessment design enables students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. Staff collectively demonstrated a sound knowledge and experience of programme and assessment delivery and were able to articulate the concept of 'high quality'. With limited learning experience so far at WIC, students could not confirm that their courses would be of high quality but were satisfied with their experience so far. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

135 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of external examiner reports, students' views, assessed students work, and third-party endorsements, the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. However, the team noted that WIC has sufficient evidence of plans which are deemed by the team to be robust and credible and the team considers that the implementation of those plans will result in the intended outcome. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

### **Q3 The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience**

136 This Core practice expects that the provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

137 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

#### **The evidence the team considered**

138 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Teaching and Learning Strategy
- b Resourcing Policy
- c CPD plan
- d WIC's Quality Management and Assurance Policy
- e Observation of Teaching document
- f WIC Strategic Plan for HE
- g College's Monitoring and Review and Quality Assurance processes
- h Work Placement Policy
- i College's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- j Governance document
- k Governance meetings
- l Academic Board minutes
- m Standardisation meetings
- n Staff training schedule
- o WIC HE Structure Roles and Responsibilities
- p A sample of nine academic and professional staff CVs and their recruitment records
- q WIC HE Structure with names
- r WIC programme
- s College module handbooks
- t Social Care modules
- u Two observations of teaching and learning to test whether the course delivery is high quality
- v Meeting with senior staff
- w Meeting with students
- x Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- y Meeting with LTU Link Tutor
- z Final meeting with senior staff.



139 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- third-party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at WIC
- students' views collected through internal and external surveys, module and course evaluations.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

140 To assess whether staff are appropriately qualified and skilled and whether they were recruited according to WIC's policies and procedures, the review team considered a representative sample of nine CVs, including three CVs from academic staff in Business and Management programme, three CVs from academic staff in Health and Social Care programme and three CVs from professional service staff. Furthermore, the review team considered nine recruitment records, including six records from academic staff and three from professional staff.

141 To test whether academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience, the review team undertook two teaching observations.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

142 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

143 To identify how WIC recruits, appoints, inducts and supports staff, the review team considered the Teaching and Learning Strategy, the Resourcing Policy, WIC Governance and Strategy document, governance meeting minutes, and spoke with senior staff and University staff.

144 To ascertain how WIC is monitoring, identifying and providing support to staff to enable staff to carry out their responsibilities in delivering a high-quality academic experience, the review team considered the Resourcing Policy, CPD plan, Academic Board minutes, the Teaching and Learning Strategy, Standardisation meetings, schedule of training, the WIC's Quality Management and Assurance Policy, the Observation of Teaching document, the WIC Strategic Plan for HE, Monitoring and Review and Quality Assurance processes, the Work Placement Policy, WIC's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and met with senior staff.

145 To consider whether WIC has sufficient qualified and skilled staff for its higher education programmes, the review team considered WIC HE Structure Roles and Responsibilities documents and WIC HE Structure with names, WIC programme handbook for LTU programmes, WIC module handbooks, sample of CVs and spoke with the LTU Link Tutor.

146 To assess whether the staff sampled were recruited according to WIC's policies and procedures, the review team considered staff recruitment records, the Resourcing Policy and held a meeting with senior staff.

147 Two observations of teaching and learning took place to test whether academic staff deliver a high-quality learning experience.

148 To test that staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to deliver a high-quality academic experience, the review team met with senior staff and academic and professional staff.

149 To test students' views about the sufficiency qualifications and skills of staff, the review team met with 10 students. Among them, eight students were from the Business and Management programme and two from the Health and Social Care programme.

### **What the evidence shows**

150 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

151 WIC has a range of policies in place to support its staff with the delivery of its higher education programmes. The Teaching and Learning Strategy emphasises effective learning and teaching through use of qualified and experienced staff. The Resourcing Policy provides the process of identifying staffing levels through Academic Board and details of the staff recruitment process. WIC's Resourcing Policy states that available posts are advertised widely, and shortlisted applicants' credentials and competencies are thoroughly tested and verified. For example, academics will be required to mark and internally verify marked student work and to deliver a demo lecture to exhibit their teaching skills. All candidates are approved by LTU and successful applicants are provided with an induction to WIC. A CPD plan is developed for them.

152 Staff recruitment requests are submitted to the Head of Higher Education, who is Chair of the Academic Board. Senior staff confirmed that such requests may come from the Registrar, Director of Studies or programme leaders. The Board of Governors, the Academic Board and Operational Management Committee all have clear responsibilities in relation to staff recruitment. For example, the Operational Management Committee is responsible for job advertisement and Academic Board appoints the interview panel and minutes from their meetings provide records that such structures have clear agenda items in relation to staff issues, staff recruitment and staff training development. Senior staff confirmed that there were 12 teaching staff for its higher education provision who were all approved by LTU. The review team found that WIC had robust and credible approaches to the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of staff because the process for recruitment is clear in its resourcing policy and is managed effectively through its deliberative committee structure.

153 WIC supports staff development arrangements through allowing time and limited amounts of paid staff development. Teaching and support staff maintain a CPD plan which will be monitored and discussed during staff appraisals as stipulated in the Teaching and Learning Strategy. There is evidence to indicate that WIC organised or facilitated staff training activities to support development of its academic and professional staff, such as training for standardisation meetings which ensure that the assessment requirements of a programme are interpreted in the same way by the academic team. In December 2019, LTU provided training to a range of WIC staff around the administration and delivery of the two higher education programmes, including admissions and an induction for the academic staff, which contributed to the development of staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The WIC's Quality Management and Assurance Policy provides guidance on teaching observation, quality of teaching and external expert training staff to ensure that their knowledge remains relevant. New academic staff are allocated a mentor and their teaching is observed from the first week, receiving feedback from staff and student evaluations. The Observation of Teaching document serves to review the quality of teaching and learning at WIC and its implementation will drive the achievement of teaching excellence as stated in

the WIC Strategic Plan for HE. Collectively, they inform WIC's Monitoring and Review and Quality Assurance processes, as well as prepare WIC for external reviews. The Work Placement Policy also indicates staff development requirements and responsibilities for work placements, and WIC's Monitoring and Evaluation Policy links student outcomes with staff development to ensure a high-quality academic experience is provided. All of which demonstrated to the review team that WIC's regulations and policies for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support for staff are robust, credible and comprehensive to ensure that it has appropriately qualified and skilled staff.

154 The WIC HE Structure Roles and Responsibilities documents illustrates generic job descriptions for different roles across WIC in a clear manner and WIC HE Structure with names provides further details and numbers of its staffing for the higher education programmes. The WIC programme handbook for LTU programmes provides information on the programme team, including a range of senior management, academic and professional staff. WIC module handbooks provide details of module teaching staff.

155 The review team considered the sample of CVs of existing academic staff and found that WIC has a sufficient number of skilled and qualified teaching staff for the Business and Management programme but an insufficient number of qualified and appropriately skilled academic staff for the Health and Social Care programme. This is because some of the teaching staff listed to teach on this programme did not have relevant teaching and work experience. However, senior staff and the LTU Link Tutor claimed that there was sufficient academic staff for the foundation year, where generic non-subject specific content was delivered, and recognised the need to further recruit academic staff for the Health and Social Care programme in 2021. Therefore, the review team concludes that there are sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality learning experience for the first year of the programme.

156 The review team found that some of the staff recruitment records revealed inconsistent information in that some lacked application forms or induction checklists. However, WIC claimed that its recruitment practice is an evolving process due to the growing use of different online recruitment platforms and less dependency on hardcopy application forms, which they consider are no longer standard practice. WIC claimed that the recruitment process is consistent with the details stated in the Resourcing Policy. Overall, the review team found that the staff recruitment records were mainly consistent with the recruitment approach that WIC applied and that most CVs confirmed that staff were appropriately qualified and skilled.

157 The observed teaching sessions undertaken at the review visit were the first teaching sessions of the modules and they were introductory in nature. The staff who taught the two sessions had sufficient qualifications and experience to deliver the sessions. Although there were differences in delivering the teaching sessions, the delivery was consistent with a teaching session introducing students to a programme.

158 The academic and professional staff met by the team, due to their different job responsibilities, described different induction experiences and focus. For example, professional staff induction included information on health and safety while academic staff were given information about the programmes they would be delivering. Staff confirmed that they were supported by WIC in their professional development according to WIC's regulations and policies.

159 At the meeting with students, which took place after they had only had a half-day learning experience at WIC, based on their limited experience so far, the students were positive about their experience.

## Conclusions

160 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below:

161 The review team concludes that WIC has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. Its policies and plans collectively demonstrate a robust and credible approach for the recruitment, appointment, induction and support of sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff. The processes for recruitment are clear and oversight is provided through WIC's deliberative committee structure. WIC demonstrated that it provides ongoing support for current and new members of staff.

162 WIC has sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience for the two foundation programmes it delivers on behalf of LTU. Although the review of CVs demonstrated that some staff on the Health and Social Care programme did not have relevant teaching and work experience, this was mitigated by the foundation year content of this programme being generic and not subject specific, and with acknowledged future recruitment requirements for the 2021 cohort of the Health and Social Care programme. Staff met by the review team have been recruited, appointed, inducted and supported according to WIC's policies and the observations of teaching and learning indicate that teaching staff are appropriately qualified and skilled. Based on their limited learning experience in WIC so far, the students were positive about the academic staff. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

163 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of external examiner reports, students' views and third-party endorsement, all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix; therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q4 The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience**

164 This Core practice expects that the provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

165 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

166 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a WIC Resourcing Policy
- b University validation report
- c College Programme Handbook for University Courses
- d Attendance, Retention and Support Policy
- e WIC HE Structure Roles and Responsibilities
- f Governance Document and Organisation Structure
- g CPD list
- h Operations Management Committee minutes
- i WIC Strategic Plan for HE
- j WIC Quality Improvement Plan
- k WIC Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- l Template for End of Module Survey and questionnaires
- m Student Engagement Policy
- n Desk-based scrutiny of VLE including access to University intranet
- o Direct assessment of the learning resources through a tour of the IT suite, classrooms and library
- p Meeting with senior staff
- q Meeting with students
- r Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- s Meeting with LTU Link Tutor
- t Final meeting with senior staff.

167 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- third-party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at WIC
- students' views collected through internal and external surveys, module and course evaluations as none are yet available.

## **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

168 As WIC has only recently started delivering programmes no sampling of evidence in relation to this Core practice was undertaken.

## **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

169 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

170 To identify how WIC's facilities and learning resources contribute to delivering a high-quality academic experience, the review team considered the Resourcing Policy, the validation report and spoke with senior staff and the LTU Link Tutor .

171 To identify WIC's approach to student support services, the review team considered the WIC Programme Handbook for University Courses and the Attendance, Retention and Support Policy, the Academic Skills and Studying with Confidence module and the Individual Learning Plans.

172 To identify how WIC's student support services contribute to delivering a high-quality academic experience, the review team considered the Resourcing Policy, HE Structure Roles and Responsibilities and spoke to senior staff.

173 To identify WIC's facilities, learning resources and student support services, the review team considered WIC's organisation structure, WIC Structure Roles and Responsibilities, Resourcing Policy, CPD list and spoke to senior staff and academic and professional staff.

174 To identify WIC's facilities, learning resources and student support services, the review team viewed the physical facilities and resources of WIC, including the VLE, and met with senior staff.

175 To identify WIC's plans to monitor resources to ensure that they are sufficient for a high-quality experience, the review team considered the Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Review, the WIC Quality Improvement Plan, the Operations Management Committee and minutes, module and programme questionnaires and the Student Engagement Policy, WIC HE Structure Roles and Responsibilities, and WIC Strategic Plan for HE.

176 To ascertain the staff responsibilities to resources and understanding of WIC's approach to resourcing programmes, the review team met with senior staff and academic and professional staff.

177 To identify students' views about facilities, learning resources and support services, the review team met with 10 students. Among them, eight students were from the Business and Management programme and two from the Health and Social Care programme.

## **What the evidence shows**

178 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

179 WIC has a clearly articulated policy and specification for determining resource allocation that specifies minimum standards in terms of access to IT, general expectations governing digital and library resources, student equipment ratios, and student support staff ratios. Students have access to dedicated computer labs and at the time of the visit WIC was in the process of implementing the further relocation of library facilities and the acquisition of the necessary textbooks agreed following validation with LTU. WIC has also provided the digital resources relevant to the programmes. The validation conditions set down by LTU included the review and confirmation of the suitability of new delivery spaces within WIC's delivery site which had been completed prior to the commencement of the programme. At the time of the visit, students did not have access to print-based textbooks, although the review team understood these had been ordered.

180 While WIC has no explicit strategy for higher education student support, WIC's organisation structure shows that an appropriate framework is in place for WIC to manage student support for the first cohort of students. For example, WIC has clear and relevant job descriptions for roles in the management of student support, such as the Registrar, Admissions Officer and Student Support Officer, that stipulate their roles as providing advice and guidance to students, identifying students' needs and directing students to personal or pastoral support. Senior staff confirmed that, in addition to their main roles, academic staff also have pastoral support roles. They also explained that the first term of teaching will focus on research skills and academic writing and that it had plans to develop its student support and resources with the assistance of LTU.

181 Recruitment processes for professional support services staff are comparable to those for academics in terms of process of qualifications checks and inductions.

182 WIC's Programme Handbook for University programmes briefly sets out arrangements for academic and non-academic support. The handbook confirms students will be allocated a personal tutor as part of a 'comprehensive student support network'. The handbooks set out the support for students with disabilities, which includes that support services and facilities can be personalised to meet individual needs and that advice and information about disabilities, specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, mental health conditions or other medical conditions, can be accessed through Disability and Dyslexia Support. The handbook also sets out that WIC offers careers support, through teaching and support staff, with the aim of developing skills and attributes that contribute to the attainment of successful career outcomes. However, no further detail is given. Students can access student support initially in two ways: through their personal tutors for academic or pastoral support, or through student support staff within the Registry Team. The Student Support Officer, who supports students on a day-to-day basis, will provide information and guidance to students on areas such as finance or housing or signpost students to other WIC staff for pastoral issues.

183 While WIC's Academic Board has oversight of student support, the Operations Management Committee (OMC) will oversee the resourcing of the programmes with fortnightly meetings. Initial monitoring of the availability and effectiveness of student support will be discussed at OMC meetings, and subsequently at Academic Board. While there is evidence of the Committee discussing resources for its higher education programmes, partnership developments and viability of programmes, WIC presented no evidence of discussion of higher education support service provision.

184 WIC will utilise a wide range of feedback, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to inform resource monitoring and improvement for its higher education programmes. Data collected will feed into WIC's Annual Monitoring and Evaluation Review which will take place at the end of every academic year. This, in turn, will feed into the wider WIC Quality Improvement Plan. WIC plans to collect student feedback on resources and support services

through a range of questionnaires in addition to considering the outcome of the annual review and to use the student representative system to elicit feedback on resources. The review team found that WIC's plans for facilities and learning resources are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes to students, and that current student support mechanisms are sufficient to deliver a high-quality academic experience for its first cohort.

185 The review team undertook a direct assessment of facilities and learning resources. The site consists of three floors in a tower building, one of which was recently acquired and was being refurbished at the time of the visit to provide meeting rooms, a computer laboratory and a social space for its students. The main teaching floor consists of four classrooms of a capacity of 25-30 students. There are 100 PCs available for student use and a further 75 tablets. Senior staff confirmed that students can access a further 16 computers in the IT suite of a local town facility. A help desk facility was provided for IT support under an open access arrangement. Students have access to a wide range of digital resources through EBSCO which includes digital copies of all required and recommended reading, and access to a wider range of resources through LTU's student portal. Library facilities are more limited and consist of a bookshelf with relevant key texts. Senior staff confirmed that WIC places greater emphasis on digital resources, particularly in terms of library provision, although students would have access to required reading in both digital and print forms. Wider access to other digital learning resources was available through LTU's intranet, including recommended reading. There are limited dedicated study or social learning spaces on the main teaching floor. Senior staff claimed that in the advent of expansion they will plan resources well in advance of student intake and have contingency plans to take over another floor in the building if student numbers grow. Overall, mindful that refurbishment was still being completed, the review team found that WIC had sufficient facilities and resources for the current cohort of students to enable a high-quality academic experience but recognised that additional resources were being organised and planned. The team concludes that facilities and learning resources provide a high-quality academic experience.

186 Senior, academic and professional support staff understand WIC's systems for resource allocation and explained WIC's systems for feedback, including service reviews that will be used to monitor and inform service developments. Academic staff also explained the support role that they play along with their academic responsibilities. The team concludes that relevant staff understand their roles and responsibilities.

187 The review team met students who were extremely positive about WIC, the level of support and accessibility of staff and their overall experience to date. However, the scope of their feedback was understandably limited given they had only just commenced study.

## **Conclusions**

188 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

189 The review team concludes that WIC has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience. The review team found that, while WIC's plans for facilities and learning resources are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes to students, this is not the case for student support services. However, this is mitigated by the scale of the provision and that current student



support mechanisms are sufficient to deliver a high-quality academic experience for its first cohort. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities including that of offering pastoral and careers support. At the time of the visit, paper-based texts were on order but not yet available and the library resources were scheduled to be relocated to a different floor, but there was evidence through observations, documentation and discussion to demonstrate that WIC had sufficient resources for the start of the delivery of the programmes. Therefore, on balance, the review team concludes that this Core practice is met.

190 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of students' views and third-party endorsements, the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. While there are credible plans in place in respect of facilities and learning resources, this is not the case for student support and their absence leads the team to have a moderate degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q5 The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience**

191 This Core practice expects that the provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

192 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

193 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a WIC Quality Management and Assurance Policy
- b WIC Teaching and Learning Strategy
- c WIC Programme approval modification and Cessation Policy
- d WIC Governance Document
- e WIC Student Engagement Policy
- f WIC HE Structure Roles and Responsibilities
- g WIC Strategic Plan for HE
- h WIC Quality Improvement Plan
- i WIC Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- j Student Representatives Handbook
- k Complaints Policy
- l Template for End of Module Survey
- m Template for end of programme Evaluation NSS Approach
- n Promotional material for student engagement
- o Meeting with senior staff
- p Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- q Meeting with students.

194 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- students' views collected through internal and external surveys, module and course evaluations as none are yet available
- examples of WIC changing or improving provision as a result of student engagement.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

195 As WIC has only recently started delivering programmes no sampling of evidence in relation to this Core practice was undertaken.

## **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

196 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

197 To identify WIC's overall approach and how it plans to actively engage students in the quality of their educational experience the review team considered the WIC Governance Document, its Student Engagement Policy, its Teaching and Learning Strategy, Student Representative Handbook, programme surveys and evaluations templates, the WIC Programme approval modification and Cessation Policy, the Monitoring and Evaluation Policy and observations of promotional material on the site, and spoke with senior and academic and professional support staff.

198 To assess how WIC intends to utilise feedback to improve or change provision as a result of student engagement, the review team considered the Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, the template for end of module surveys, the template for end of programme evaluation, WIC's Complaints Policy and considered You Said, We Did posters and information across the site.

199 The review team met with 10 students. Among them, eight students were from the Business and Management programme and two from the Health and Social Care programme.

## **What the evidence shows**

200 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

201 WIC's overall approach to student engagement is one of partnership that is reflected at both a strategic and operational level and which is outlined in its Teaching and Learning Strategy. WIC has a clearly defined Student Engagement Policy which outlines the opportunities for student participation and includes membership on the Board of Governors, Academic Management Committee, Programme Boards, Academic Board and Staff Student Liaison Committee. The student representative role is supported by the Student Representative Handbook which contains details about the role and responsibilities of a student representative, the key tasks, including attending committees, acting as conduit for student feedback and meeting with external examiners. Student representatives will be elected for each class in week three of the programmes, therefore, at the time of the review visit, there were no student representatives. Student representatives will be collectively trained once appointed, with training provided for any representatives appointed after this time as needed. Additional training will also be provided to student representatives when taking part in approval and review panels. Student representatives will be encouraged to inform the Principal of any available external training pertinent to their role, for example around leadership, for which WIC will pay.

202 WIC also has plans for students to provide formal programme feedback through module and programme surveys and evaluations and through more informal mechanisms, including engagement with the personal tutorial system and encouraging feedback to staff as part of continual dialogue and engagement with students through displays of promotional material around the site.

203 WIC also has plans for students to contribute to the development and approval of new programmes, to consider responses to external examiners, to participate in Periodic Reviews and participate in a wide range of College projects. The review team found that WIC has a clear, effective and comprehensive approach to engaging students both individually, through informal and formal feedback mechanisms, and collectively, through WIC's comprehensive student representative system, with student representatives sitting on deliberative committees at all levels of WIC, in the quality of their educational experience.

204 WIC's planned questionnaire surveys at programme and module level will allow students to comment on their broader student experience, including their experience of services and processes. The feedback from these surveys will be fed into the overall Programme Review and its subsequent action plan. Student representatives will also raise informal complaints from their class peers as outlined in WIC's Complaints Policy. Senior staff claim that WIC has already received feedback from students recently enrolled onto the higher education programmes on the admissions process, which they would use to review for the next intake. The review team found that there was already an established culture of responding to students' feedback with 'you said we did' displays across the site. The review team found that WIC has credible and robust plans in place to actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience, and to use the feedback it receives to improve students' learning experience as there are clear plans and mechanisms in place as to how it will be considered in its overall programme monitoring framework.

205 Senior staff claim that students will benefit from studying in a close-knit community with many opportunities to provide feedback on an informal basis through ongoing dialogue with staff. WIC has experience with a proactive approach in further education programmes involving students and responding to feedback as it occurs within a culture of continuous improvement. Academic and professional support staff cited various improvements in response to student feedback, including the investment in additional space, the purchasing of additional computers including tablets, and new furniture. Although these examples were not from the current cohort, the team consider that this illustrates WIC's commitment to engaging students appropriately and demonstrated its responsiveness in using feedback to generate continued improvement.

## **Conclusions**

206 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

207 The review team concludes that WIC will actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. This is because WIC has robust and evidence-based approaches and plans for engaging students individually and collectively, with a range of formal policies and strategies, quality assurance and governance processes and evaluation mechanisms as well as informal approaches. WIC has a comprehensive plan in place for student representatives and training for the role. The mechanisms for students to engage individually and collectively through informal and formal arrangements are outlined in the Student Engagement Policy. WIC's plans to consider and feed back to students were credible and robust. WIC was able to demonstrate its understanding and experience of ongoing responses to student feedback through providing examples from further education programmes. However, due to the stage in the programme delivery there was no available evidence to assess the effectiveness of the impact of the

approach or outcomes. Similarly, although the review team met students who had only very recently enrolled on the programmes, and although their feedback was very positive in terms of their experience so far, they did not have any direct experience of directly participating and engaging in these processes and no student representatives had been appointed. However, the review team concludes that this Core practice is met.

208 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of students' views and examples of WIC changing or improving provision as a result of student engagement, all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. The lack of this evidence, while reflecting WIC's current stage in the programme delivery cycle, means the effectiveness of WIC's approach to student engagement could not be fully tested. However, WIC's approach to student engagement is clear and it has robust and credible plans to actively engage students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. Therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q6 The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students**

209 This Core practice expects that the provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

210 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

211 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Appeals Policy
- b Complaints Policy
- c University's Academic Regulations
- d LTU Appeals Procedure
- e LTU Complaints Procedure
- f Memorandum of Agreement
- g Student Induction
- h LTU Handbook for Assessment Practice Guide for Staff
- i Student Portal, website and College noticeboards
- j Programme Handbook
- k Meeting with senior staff
- l Meeting with students
- m Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- n Meeting with LTU Link Tutor.

212 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- examples of specific complaints and appeals as WIC has only recently started delivering programmes.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

213 As WIC has only recently started delivering programmes no sampling of evidence in relation to this Core practice was undertaken.

### **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

214 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have

been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

215 To identify WIC's processes for handling complaints and appeals and to confirm that these processes are fair and transparent, the review team considered the Memorandum of Agreement, LTU's Academic Regulations, University Academic Appeals Procedure, the Handbook on Assessment Practice, WIC's Complaints Policy and Appeals Policy.

216 To understand and test their knowledge of the complaints and academic appeals procedures and their own role and that of WIC, the review team held meetings with senior and academic and professional staff.

217 To ascertain whether information on complaints and appeals was appropriately signposted, clear and accessible to students, the review team considered WIC's VLE and website and student induction information, and spoke to students.

### **What the evidence shows**

218 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

219 WIC is responsible for administering the first stage of LTU's academic complaints procedure and stages one and two of the appeals process, as confirmed in the LTU Memorandum of Agreement which also confirms that WIC can resolve any non-academic and informal complaints. Thereafter, LTU will deal with stages two and three of formal complaints or appeals at stage three, the processes for which are outlined in LTU's Academic Regulations, Academic Appeals Procedure and the Handbook on Assessment Practice. LTU's Link Tutor confirmed that LTU is fully responsible for academic complaints and appeals. For stage one of the academic complaints process, WIC responds to the complainant using its own Complaints Policy and, with regards to appeals, stages one and two of WIC's Appeals Policy apply.

220 WIC's Complaints Policy also sets out grounds for, and the scope of, non-academic complaints. The Policy notes that, as far as possible, the Policy references and reflects the good practice guidelines of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, of which WIC is a member. The Policy is aligned with LTU requirements while also contextualising such requirements within WIC's internal reporting frameworks. The Complaints Policy sets out a clear staged process with defined timelines. It confirms that informal complaints can be raised through student representatives, lecturers or programme leaders.

221 The first stage seeks to resolve the complaint locally. If there is no resolution to an academic complaint, students are directed to make a formal complaint using a standard form appended to the Complaints Policy which will then be referred to LTU. In the case of non-academic complaints, the Registrar compiles details of the complaint before passing it to the Head of Higher Education, who commissions a Complaints Panel to investigate and report its findings to the Academic Board for consideration. Acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint will be sent within five working days. Where a complaint is made against a member of staff, the Registrar sends a copy of the complaint to the member of staff for their response. If the student has been granted anonymity the name will be redacted. The student will be notified of any outcome or action taken of any complaint within 15 working days. Students may appeal the outcome on specific grounds. The Registrar will compile details of the appeal and submit it to the Chair of the Board of Governors who appoints a panel for consideration of the appeal. The completion of this process is 20 working days. If, at this point, the student remains unsatisfied they can escalate the complaint to LTU.

222 The Appeals Procedure confirms that for stage one (Conciliation), the student should meet with the programme leader within 10 days of receiving an assessed mark. The programme leader takes ownership of the appeal in the first instance and liaises with assessors or escalates the appeal to the Director of Studies. If the student is not satisfied by the outcome of stage one of the appeals process, the student must formally submit the academic appeal using the Academic Appeal Form. This must be completed within five working days of the conciliatory meeting but no longer than 15 days after publication of the results from the relevant Assessment Board. The appeal is considered at Academic Board who selects a panel to convene within five working days and the outcome is then reported to the student five working days post the panel meeting. The student can then engage with LTU if dissatisfied by the outcome.

223 The team concludes that WIC's plans to develop fair, transparent and accessible procedures for complaints and appeals are credible and robust and that the procedures for handling complaints and appeals are definitive, fair and transparent, and to be delivered in a timely manner.

224 Staff whom the team met demonstrated familiarity with the role of WIC in handling the first stage of the complaints and appeals process and the role of LTU in all aspects of the later stages of both processes. These processes are transparent and accessible to students and applicants, being clearly signposted on College noticeboards, with full access to the WIC process through the VLE, and website and programme handbooks for LTU processes. Students confirmed that the student induction programme provided information on how to access the complaints and appeals process. Therefore, the review team concluded that WIC procedures for handling complaints and appeals are accessible to students.

225 WIC will record and monitor any themes or trends arising from complaints and appeals relating to its higher education provision to inform further development. Such recording and monitoring apply equally to both informal and formal representations, with Academic Board having oversight of such monitoring and any resulting actions from identified themes being subject to consideration by the Board of Directors. The Academic Board will also assess, monitor and review the number, level, type and frequency of complaints and academic appeals made over the course of each academic year during the Annual Monitoring Review.

## **Conclusions**

226 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

227 The review team concluded that WIC has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to students. Its plans to develop fair, transparent and accessible complaints and appeals procedures are credible and robust and the procedures for handling complaints and appeals are definitive, fair and transparent and will deliver timely outcomes. Each stage of the complaints and the appeals process is clearly outlined, with defined responsibilities and timelines. Information for students on the procedures for handling complaints and appeals is clear and accessible through the student portal and initially provided to students through induction. Reference to complaints is also displayed on College noticeboards to raise awareness. Senior, academic and professional support staff understand WIC's and their own role in ensuring that the first stages of appeals and complaints are processed fairly, transparently and in a timely manner in accordance with



LTU regulations. Plans are in place to monitor all complaints and appeals through the committee structure. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

228 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of examples of complaints and appeals, all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. The lack of this evidence, while reflecting WIC's current stage in the programme delivery cycle, means the effectiveness of WIC's plans to develop fair, transparent and accessible complaints and appeals processes could not be fully tested. However, these plans are credible and robust and, therefore, the review team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q8 Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them**

229 This Core practice expects that where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.

230 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

231 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Memorandum of Agreement
- b University Academic Regulations
- c BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care programme specification
- d BA (Hons) Business and Management programme specification
- e Collaboration Approval Report and subsequent conditions
- f University and College Action Plan
- g Staff Training Schedule
- h Progress on Staff Training
- i Work Placement Handbook
- j Work Placement templates
- k Minutes of the Board of Governors
- l Module and programme evaluation templates
- m Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- n Meeting with senior staff
- o Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- p Meeting with students
- q Meeting with LTU Link Tutor.

232 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- third-party endorsements as none are available for the provision on offer at WIC
- external examiner reports, students' views and assessed student work are not yet available.

## **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

233 As WIC has only recently started delivering programmes no sampling of evidence in relation to this Core practice was undertaken.

## **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

234 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

235 To identify WIC's approach to ensure a high-quality academic experience in partnership with LTU, and to assess whether WIC has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring a high-quality academic experience, the review team considered the Memorandum of Agreement, LTU Academic Regulations, programme handbooks and the programme specifications, LTU's Collaboration approval report and subsequent conditions, LTU and College Action Plan, the Staff Training Schedule and Progress on Staff Training.

236 To ascertain WIC's approach to monitoring the partnership and programme arrangements, the review team considered the minutes of the Board of Governors, the Memorandum of Agreement, LTU Academic Regulations, the proposed module and programme evaluation templates and the Monitoring and Evaluation Policy.

237 To understand WIC's plans for work placements to ensure a high-quality academic experience, the review team considered the BSc (Hons) Health and Social Care programme specification, the BA (Hons) Business and Management programme specification, Work Placement Handbook and Work Placement templates.

238 To test whether staff understand and discharge effectively their responsibilities of LTU, the review team met with senior staff and academic and professional staff. To verify LTU's engagement with WIC, the review team met with the LTU Link Tutor.

239 To assess students' views about quality of courses delivered in partnership with LTU, the review team met with 10 students. Eight students were from the Business and Management programme and two from the Health and Social Care programme.

## **What the evidence shows**

240 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

241 At the time of the review visit, WIC was in the early stages of its partnership with LTU, the Memorandum of Agreement having been signed on 3 December 2019 and the first week of delivery commencing on the week of the review visit. LTU Academic Regulations, together with the Memorandum of Agreement, provide a clear framework for WIC to manage and deliver a high-quality academic experience. The responsibilities and expectations of each party are detailed in the Memorandum of Agreement in relation to student recruitment and admissions, staff approval and learning resources, programme modification, development and delivery, assessment design and marking, annual monitoring, student engagement, complaints and appeals. The Academic Regulations provide a framework of how the programme should be delivered, including assessment practices and procedures. The Regulations are supported by the two programme handbooks and the programme specifications which include the learning outcomes and aspects of assessments. The

academic regulations, handbooks and programmes specifications, along with the clear, comprehensive and up-to-date agreement and regulations, ensure that the academic experience is high quality.

242 WIC and LTU have worked closely together since the Memorandum of Agreement was signed in preparing College staff for the delivery of LTU programmes. LTU's Collaboration Approval Report to approve the franchise delivery of the two programmes and subsequent conditions included the development of a University and College Action Plan which addressed operational requirements to be completed before commencement of delivery. The action plan, which has been monitored by both WIC and LTU, included meetings and training by LTU with College staff to ensure that they understand LTU processes such as admissions and access to LTU learning resources. Another condition was the approval by LTU of new additional spaces obtained by WIC on the existing site which had been signed off by the LTU Link Tutor by the time of the review visit. An effective and close working relationship between WIC and LTU was also being established through involvement and accessibility of an on-site University Link Tutor. The Link Tutor has and will continue to be present on a weekly basis indefinitely, to provide continuity of support at an operational and developmental level. WIC has demonstrated that it has actively engaged with LTU to the benefit of delivering a high-quality experience and its plans for continued engagement are comprehensive and robust through the relationship with the LTU Link Tutor. The review team concludes that, working in partnership with LTU, WIC has robust and credible plans to ensure a high-quality academic experience.

243 WIC has a series of plans to monitor programmes which will ensure a high-quality academic experience for the students undertaking LTU programmes at WIC. For instance, programme design and delivery matters are assessed at Academic Board and Operational Management Committee before they are ratified by the Board of Governors. As part of the agreement and requirements of LTU, WIC will submit an annual monitoring report for both programmes of which student feedback will form a part. No external examiner's reports were available as the programmes had only just started delivering, but WIC will engage with external examiners as outlined in LTU's Assessment Guide for Staff. WIC has plans for students to also meet with the external examiners. The review team found that WIC had credible plans for monitoring the arrangements of its partnership with LTU through its committee structure, programme monitoring, student feedback and the use of external examiners' input.

244 Students studying on either higher education programme will have to undertake compulsory work placements in the second year of the programmes following the completion of the foundation year. As part of WIC's plans for managing work placements, it has developed a Work Placement Policy and work placement templates which provide a general framework of guidance and recommended practices to WIC and contains sections on the expectations and requirements of the placement, professional conduct and roles and responsibilities. The review team found the Policy comprehensive and includes information about the requirements for signed contracts with the employers and students. Pre-placement requirements are highlighted, such as Disclosure and Barring Service checks, and an induction for placement providers and students is detailed which also introduces the role of the Work Placement Mentor and the Work Placement Supervisor, both roles are staff at the placement provider. The Policy also highlights the processes for quality assurance and risk assessment checks at the placement provider. The Work Placement Templates include templates for agreements with the work placement provider and the students, health and safety template, induction list and a development plan template designed for the student to reflect on the placement experience. Together, the review team formed the view that both documents provide a credible and robust approach to ensure a high-quality academic experience at work placements.

245 Staff in WIC who met with the review team collectively demonstrated a sound knowledge of their responsibilities to LTU programmes and referred to quality assurance procedures and plans such as the standardisation process to demonstrate their effective discharge of such responsibilities.

246 The students who met with the review team on the first day of their learning at WIC were fully aware of who would award their degrees.

## **Conclusions**

247 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

248 The review team concludes that WIC works in partnership with LTU to deliver its higher education provision and has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them. The partnership agreement is clear, comprehensive and up to date and reflects WIC's policies for the management of the partnership. Staff from both WIC and LTU understand their respective responsibilities for quality and the LTU Link Tutor will continue to be present on a weekly basis indefinitely, to provide continuity of support. Working in partnership with LTU, WIC has robust and credible plans to ensure a high-quality academic experience. WIC has plans in place to monitor all higher education provision to ensure that a high-quality academic experience is assured and has comprehensive plans in place to manage future work placements. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

249 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of students' views, external examiner reports and third-party endorsements, all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. The lack of evidence relating to external examiners and third-party endorsements means that the effectiveness of the arrangements could not be fully tested. However, the available evidence underpinned by robust and credible plans leads the review team to have a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

## **Q9 The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes**

250 This Core practice expects that the provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

251 The QAA review team completed an assessment of this Core practice in line with the principles and outcomes that are detailed in the [Quality and Standards Review for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students: Guidance for Providers](#) (March 2019).

### **The evidence the team considered**

252 The QAA review team assessed the evidence presented to it, both prior to and at the visit, to determine if WIC could meet this Core practice at a threshold level. The Quality and Standards Review Guidance for Providers Applying to Register with the Office for Students includes a matrix (Annex 4) which identifies key pieces of evidence that a provider may present and which the team should consider when making a judgement against this Core practice to ensure that the relevant outcomes are being delivered. The review team used that matrix to ensure that the evidence it considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other reviews and focused on relevant outcomes. A list of the key pieces of evidence seen by the team is below:

- a Strategic Plan for HE
- b College's Quality Improvement Plan
- c Governors and Strategy document
- d The Resourcing Policy
- e The HE Structure and Roles and Responsibilities
- f College's Academic Regulations
- g Attendance, Retention and Student Support Policy
- h College's Programme Handbook for University programmes
- i Academic Skills and Studying with Confidence module
- j Analysis of Academic Performance
- k College's Assessment Policy
- l University's Handbook of Assessment Guide for staff
- m WIC Work Placement Policy
- n Work Placement Templates
- o Employability Committee
- p Meeting with senior staff
- q Meeting with students
- r Meeting with academic and professional support staff
- s Meeting with LTU Link Tutor
- t Final meeting with senior staff.

253 Some of the key pieces of evidence, outlined in Annex 4, were not considered by the review team. These pieces of evidence and the reason why they were not considered during this review are outlined below:

- students' views and assessed student work are not yet available.

### **How any samples of evidence were constructed**

254 As WIC has only recently started delivering programmes no sampling of evidence in relation to this Core practice was undertaken.

## **Why and how the team considered this evidence**

255 As highlighted, all of the evidence submitted by WIC was considered by the review team either prior to the visit or at the visit itself. As such, several pieces of evidence will have been considered to allow the review team to make its judgement regarding WIC's ability to meet this Core practice. To ensure consistency in decision-making and to ensure that those decisions focused on outcomes, the review team considered the key pieces of evidence outlined in Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers. These key pieces of evidence and the reason for scrutinising them are outlined below.

256 To identify WIC's approach to student support, including how it identifies and monitors the needs of individual students, and to assess whether WIC has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that all students are supported to achieve successful academic outcomes, the review team considered the Strategic Plan for HE, WIC's Quality Improvement Plan, Governance and Strategy document, the Resourcing Policy and the HE Structure, Roles and Responsibilities, WIC's Academic Regulations, the Attendance, Retention and Student Support Policy WIC's Programme Handbook for University programmes, the Academic Skills and Studying with Confidence module, the LDP template and the Analysis of Academic Performance.

257 To identify WIC's approach to providing comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback on student's assessed work, the review team considered WIC's Assessment Policy and LTU's Handbook of Assessment Guide for staff.

258 To assess whether WIC has credible, robust and evidence-based plans for ensuring that all students are supported to achieve successful professional outcomes, the review team considered the WIC Work Placement Policy, the Work Placement Templates and WIC's Employability Committee.

259 To test whether staff understand their responsibilities and are appropriately skilled and supported, the review team met senior management, academic and professional staff and the final meeting with senior management.

260 To identify students' views about student support mechanisms and to assess whether students who have made particular use of student support services regard those services as accessible and effective, the review team met with 10 students. Eight students were from the Business and Management programme and two from the Health and Social Care programme.

## **What the evidence shows**

261 The review team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

262 WIC's Strategic Plan for Higher Education contains eight objectives, four of which are associated with students' outcomes and support, which includes that 'programmes should lead to high student outcomes including employment'. The Plan states that WIC aims to do this by meeting employment demand, ensuring the curriculum includes a strong practical element and that the teaching and learning as well as extracurricular activities should include a range of employability activities. WIC's Quality Improvement Plan identifies employability and student outcomes as one of its themes, which align with the Strategic Plan's aims of 'delivering a curriculum that meets the needs of students, employers and the expectations of the sector'. Both the Strategic Plan and the Quality Improvement Plan are considered at the Board of Governors. The Resourcing Policy sets out that staff resource for effective student support should be based on, for academic staff, a staff/student ratio of 1:25 and for support staff a ratio of 1:40 which the review team found aligns with the current numbers of higher education students and the roles in the organisation chart.

263 WIC's Programme Handbook for LTU programmes clearly signposts students to where and how they can access academic or non-academic support, for example the handbook confirms students will be allocated a personal tutor who has responsibility for following student progress and helping them develop all aspects of their work. Personal tutors have a specific focus on developing critical thinking skills to build confidence and aptitude for independent learning and autonomy. The Handbook confirms that, in the foundation year, academic skills will be covered in the compulsory modules. The Academic Skills and Studying with Confidence module will enable students to develop different academic skills in order to achieve successful academic outcomes.

264 WIC's Academic Regulations contain the Attendance, Retention and Student Support Policy which is designed to enable staff to detect at-risk students at an early stage through non-attendance or non-submission of work and gives staff guidance on appropriate and timely action to take, with a key element being student support. The Policy also details where else students can access support, including from tutors in class, from student representatives who attend meetings where support and welfare are discussed, the Student Support Manager, programme leaders and Directors of Studies who are identified as being available to discuss confidential matters regarding personal, health and pastoral matters, and the Student Management Committee who can recommend or advise students who require additional support or are at risk. The Policy does not say how these arrangements can be accessed. Both WIC's Programme Handbook and Academic Regulations can be found on the VLE which students can access once they commence study on the programmes. The review team formed the view that WIC's plans to support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes are comprehensive, robust and credible and that its approach to student support will facilitate successful academic and professional outcomes.

265 Every student is required, in collaboration with their personal tutor, to develop and maintain an Individual Learning Development Plan to identify and provide ongoing academic support suited to their specific needs. The Plan lists learning styles for students to consider as well as requiring students to identify personal goals or targets they want to achieve throughout studying on the programme. These are reviewed with the personal tutor through a mid-course review process involving feedback and guidance updates. The student is required to meet with the personal tutor at the end of the programme to discuss achievements and feedback on the course.

266 Students who are identified as being at risk in terms of failure to complete their studies through non-attendance and/or non-submission of assessment are placed on Academic Probation and are required to complete and adhere to an Individual Plan for Academic Success. The Plan highlights any academic, attendance or personal issues which may affect performance and then details what academic resources and support will be put in place to support the student, as well detailing agreed goals and action plans. The Plan is completed by the student with a programme leader and any additional resources are agreed by the Director of Studies. Overall, the review team formed the view that WIC's approach to student support, including how it identifies and monitors the needs of individual students, is credible and robust.

267 Both higher education programmes have work placement elements which the Placement Handbook explains is to provide students with experience of applying theory in the workplace, and to facilitate opportunities for reflective analysis of practice in the workplace. Senior staff confirmed that, in considering awarding bodies for partnership, LTU was an attractive partnership because of the work placement elements within its programmes that would support successful professional outcomes. The Placement Handbook sets out that WIC will provide students with guidance as to appropriate



placements. Students will be encouraged to secure a placement, but where a student cannot find a placement the Placement Coordinator will identify and allocate one.

268 In considering students' work-based learning needs and professional outcomes, the WIC Work Placement Policy clarifies the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations for WIC, the employer and the student. The Policy also provides a general framework of guidance and recommended practices for all programme teams involved in the organisation and management of work-based and placement learning. Work Placement Templates ensure students document their professional development. Students will be allocated both a work placement mentor at the placement organisation and a College placement mentor to support them to achieve successful professional outcomes.

269 Senior staff claim to have developed a network of contacts and employers through its other provision, which they hope to use for the higher education programmes. Placements will be supported by WIC's Employability Committee which was commissioned by the Assistant Principal to embed employability throughout the programmes. It supports the development of employability skills outside of programmes so that students develop skills and confidence in the workplace. WIC has run events and workshops to enhance the skills development required for students to secure good career prospects and intends to do this for its higher education students.

270 Academic staff state that they have industry experience and that they will build industry and professional links to support and develop students' employability skills. Academic staff CVs that the review team considered for the Business programme include evidence of industry experience in business and sales. Professional staff mentioned that students would be mentored prior to attending job interviews and receive advice on how to write a CV. Guidance would also be offered in respect to progression into employment. The review team found that there were plans in place through the curricula of the two programmes for WIC to support all students to achieve successful professional outcomes.

271 Staff explained their understanding and roles in WIC's approach to supporting students to achieve academic and professional outcomes, including their role as personal tutors and in the student's Individual Learning Plans and Individual Plan for Academic Success, which include close monitoring and one-to-one meetings. They also explained how they support students with additional needs for assessment and how mitigating circumstances are applied through a formal process. Wherever possible, senior staff stated that there would be one member of staff assigned to each student requiring additional support. WIC also uses external resources where appropriate, such as the organisation Mind for students who required mental health support. Academic staff confirmed their approach to using formative and summative assessments to support students to achieve their academic outcomes and confirmed their role in the personal tutoring system. Senior staff claimed that all full-time staff have specific responsibilities in supporting students in addition to the responsibilities they were recruited for, but that will change once the provision grows. Senior staff also claimed that they are working closely with the LTU Link tutor to improve and develop further its student support for that growth. Overall, the review team found that College staff understand WIC's approach and their role within it for supporting students in achieving successful academic and professional outcomes.

272 There was no assessed student work available during the visit. However, WIC's Assessment Policy provides guidelines to assessors in respect to formative and summative feedback. It instructs feedback to be timely; that is, feedback should be given as quickly as is practically possible, and in sufficient time for students to be able to review work in order to improve the next related piece of work. Feedback should be developmental with focused specific comments on aspect of the work to help students to understand key points, and it should be encouraging to offer a balance between what is good about the work and what

could be improved. LTU's Handbook of Assessment Guide for staff confirms that written feedback should be sent to students on its programmes within 20 working days from the deadline of submission. The handbook also details guidelines on effective and helpful summative and formative feedback. The review team found that both documents provide a framework to ensure that staff provide all students with comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback to support students to achieve successful academic outcomes.

273 The students who met the review team on the first day of learning confirmed that they had recently received an induction which outlined various ways to get support from WIC. They could not yet confirm whether that would be effective or not but were satisfied with the student experience so far.

## **Conclusions**

274 As described above, the review team considered all of the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether WIC meets this Core practice. In making this judgement the team followed the process set out in Guidance for Providers and took account of the key statements outlined in Annex 5. In so doing, the review team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other reviews and remained outcomes focused. Its conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

275 The review team concludes that WIC supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. While there was no assessed student work, LTU's Handbook of Assessment Guide and WIC's Assessment Policy provides a framework to ensure that staff provide all students with comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback. Staff understand WIC's approach and their role within it for supporting students in achieving successful academic and professional outcomes through the personal tutor system, Individual Learning Plans, and putting in place plans for students at risk. The review team found that the current approach, which includes identifying student's individual needs and considering employability in its higher education curriculum, facilitates successful academic and professional outcomes. WIC's plans to support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes are comprehensive, robust and credible. The review team concludes, therefore, that this Core practice is met.

276 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects, with the exception of students' views and assessed student work, all of the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. The lack of evidence relating to students' views and external examiner's reports, while reflecting WIC's current stage in the programme delivery cycle, means that the effectiveness of the approaches could not be tested. However, the available evidence underpinned by robust and credible plans leads the review team to have a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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