



Designated Quality Body
in England

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

Peking University HSBC Business School – UK Campus (PHBS-UK)



Review Report

March 2022

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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 provided, the assessment team considers that the standards PHBS-UK has set are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The evidence scrutinised by the team demonstrates that the standards described in the approved course documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and the provider's academic regulations and policies should ensure the setting and maintenance of academic standards at the relevant threshold level which are consistent with the FHEQ.</p> <p>The team considers that the standards that will be achieved by PHBS-UK's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework, based on evidence provided as part of this review. The review team considers that the evidence seen demonstrates that the provider's academic regulations and policies should ensure that these standards are maintained. The team concludes that staff fully understand PHBS-UK's approach to maintaining these standards and are committed to applying this approach.</p> <p>PHBS-UK has developed its own academic regulations which have been approved by the Academic Board which is appointed by the University (Business School) in accordance with its binding obligations. These regulations fully embed the English sector-recognised standards and map the University rules against them. PHBS-UK has established an Academic Board to ensure that the academic standards for the programmes meet both those within the English sector-recognised standards and the standards requirements of the</p>

				<p>University. PHBS-UK has also developed key policies and procedures on assessment, and a quality manual to support the setting and maintenance of academic standards. The assessment team concludes that this documentation confirms that there are clear and comprehensive academic regulations and frameworks to support the setting and maintenance of academic standards at relevant threshold levels, which meet the requirements for higher education sector-recognised standards.</p> <p>PHBS-UK's further plans to strengthen the external scrutiny within its governance structures currently include an Academic Board which oversees quality and standards. PHBS-UK has agreements and implementation plans for the proposed three developments starting in September 2022. The assessment team concludes that these plans confirm that they are detailed in setting out the different stages of development, and the independent Governance arrangements to ensure that relevant threshold standards are met. Therefore, the team determined that PHBS-UK's plans for maintaining threshold standards are robust and credible and fully understood by staff.</p> <p>The guidance accompanying programme documentation contained with PHBS-UK's assessment and associated policies, and quality manual, promote understanding and guide the maintenance of threshold standards in line with English sector-recognised standards.</p> <p>External examiners confirm that standards set in assignments and achieved by students meet threshold standards and are also confirmed to be in line with English sector-recognised standards. The assessment team found that student work demonstrates that credit and qualifications are awarded only where relevant standards are met.</p>
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				Senior, academic and professional support staff fully understand the requirements within the PHBS-UK academic regulations and associated policies and procedures. They were able to explain how they ensured that students were only given credits when they meet the thresholds within English sector-recognised standards and those of the comparable University rules. Based on the scrutiny of the evidence provided, the assessment team concludes that this Core practice is met.
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	<p>The assessment team, based on the evidence presented, determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the provider's courses are reasonably comparable with those set by other English providers. The assessment team considered that the approved programme documentation and the provider's academic regulations and policies should ensure that sector-recognised standards are maintained appropriately.</p> <p>PHBS-UK's academic regulations clearly and comprehensively establish the framework for supporting the maintenance of academic standards at threshold and beyond for the courses it offers. It has developed specific academic governance arrangements which have been approved by the University (Business School) in accordance with its binding obligations, to ensure these standards are comparable with those achieved in other English providers. The academic regulations include a table which clearly explains the application of grade equivalence between English and Chinese marking systems.</p> <p>PHBS-UK plans to strengthen externality by appointing additional external examiners and an external quality adviser to further improve oversight on achievement of comparable standards for its existing courses and the planned developments with [REDACTED]. The assessment team saw evidence of detailed and credible implementation plans</p>

			<p>with specific arrangements for robust independent oversight of maintenance of comparable standards.</p> <p>External examiner reports and scrutiny of examination board minutes confirm that external examiners are satisfied that standards above threshold are aligned appropriately with grade descriptions.</p> <p>Assessed student work confirms that students are given opportunities to achieve levels beyond threshold level. The work also shows that students achieve levels which are comparable to those achieved in other English higher education providers. The assessment team saw evidence demonstrating that credit for each course and grades are only given when the students meet the required standards and grades are only awarded when students meet the relevant grade descriptor.</p> <p>Staff fully understand PHBS-UK's academic regulations and approaches to maintaining standards for its courses. They understand the dual marking systems covering both English and Chinese higher education assessment practice and are able to successfully apply them when setting and maintaining standards at threshold and above.</p> <p>Students were able to explain what they were required to do to reach standards beyond threshold level and confirmed the commitment to achieve high standards. They agree that they have had helpful guidance from the start of the course to help them understand the dual system of marking and were fully satisfied with this approach.</p> <p>Therefore, the assessment 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</p>
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				achieved in other English providers and this Core practice is met.
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>PHBS-UK's approach to the management of its agreement with the University informs the arrangements to ensure that courses delivered meet the relevant academic standards. This agreement confirms the establishment of a governance framework including the Academic Board for PHBS-UK to manage the standards and quality of its courses in line with sector-recognised standards and those of the University.</p> <p>The Programme and Course Approval Policy and the PHBS-UK draft policy for the development of new collaborative programmes. Collaborative Policy both provide further direction for partnership work in terms of the new curriculum and the establishment of new partners. The proposals for collaboration with [REDACTED] demonstrate effective consideration of responsibility for academic standards through the appointment of joint programme boards thus ensuring an effective framework for maintaining academic standards.</p> <p>External examiners appointed for PHBS-UK courses confirm that student performance is in line with both English sector-recognised standards and the University academic standards.</p> <p>Senior, academic and professional support staff from PHBS-UK were able to explain how they carried out their respective roles regarding the partnership with the University. They understood the academic standards they need to maintain when teaching and assessing for students to succeed in their courses. They understood how student achievement aligns to English sector recognised standards and how this applies in the context of University partnerships. Staff from the University were able to explain how the arrangements with PHBS-UK as the delivery centre works and how the responsibility for standards is</p>

				implemented. Therefore, the assessment team concludes that this Core practice is met.
S4	The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	Met	High	<p>PHBS-UK has policies to support the assessment and classification processes for existing and potential courses and programmes, and to support the engagement of externality. The Programme and Course Approval Policy which supports the process for developing new courses and new partnerships requires information on, among other things, the teaching, learning and assessment and requires the engagement of external academics. This policy sets clear guidelines for approving new courses or programmes and procedures for approving new programme and new partners taking into account the academic standards of the awarding bodies and the requirements of the FHEQ at Level 7.</p> <p>PHBS-UK plans to appoint more external examiners to support further developments with UK universities in addition to the current external examiner for the courses it delivers. It is also at the latter stage of appointing a Quality Advisor to become a member of its Academic Board to provide guidance on quality assurance matters as an independent adviser. The planned developments with [REDACTED] all specify the requirement to appoint external examiners to the programmes being developed.</p> <p>PHBS-UK currently has one external examiner who has been appointed to offer the independent external oversight of the quality and standards of the courses it offers. External examiner reports provide evidence of consistent external moderation of student work and grades achieved, and this enabled the assessment team to conclude that PHBS-UK's assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent and that it responds in a timely and appropriate</p>

				<p>manner to any recommendations made by the external examiner.</p> <p>Staff understand the importance of the role of the external examiner in providing external scrutiny of the quality and standards of the courses delivered. Senior staff talked about the plans for appointing more externals especially in light of further developments, including professional accreditation. Staff demonstrated understanding of the mapping of Level 7 FHEQ requirements with the University's academic regulations and the different assessment and classification levels for their courses. Academic staff explained how they applied this mapping when assessing and marking student assessments and discussed their engagement with external examiners for moderation activities. Staff also explained how they applied assessment and classification requirements appropriately in line with academic regulations and course requirements.</p> <p>Students confirmed that they are fully aware of the assessment and classification processes for their courses and know they can easily access information on them within their student handbooks and the VLE. They described the assessment processes as fair, and the guidance given enables them to understand what is expected of them.</p> <p>The team's scrutiny of student assessed work confirmed that moderation processes are effective in ensuring that marking is consistent in applying appropriate assessment classifications. Student work also shows that students are performing in line with the expected outcomes at Level 7 and confirm that assessment and classification processes are carried out in line with the academic regulations and the requirements of the individual courses. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p>
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Q1	The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.	Met	Moderate	<p>PHBS-UK manages any arrangements with recruitment agents effectively to ensure strict adherence to its policies and requirements. PHBS-UK has ensured that the agent is briefed on PHBS-UK requirements, provided with the information they need and there are plans to review compliance of the agent. The institutional policy and academic regulations relating to admissions is clear, and the contract between PHBS-UK and the University (Business School) explicitly gives precedence to the UK system. Arrangements in place include policies to cover all aspects of the admissions process, including the facility for complaints to be made and considered fairly and on a timely basis.</p> <p>The institutional policy and academic regulations relating to admissions is clear, and the contract between PHBS-UK and the University (Business School) explicitly gives precedence to the English system. Arrangements in place include policies to cover all aspects of the admissions process, including the facility for complaints to be made and considered fairly and on a timely basis.</p> <p>The assessment team found that staff involved in admissions understand their role and are appropriately skilled and trained through a supported process, and that at present, senior staff lead on recruitment and admissions processes. Students tend to agree that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive, because those met by the team reported that the process was fair and very clear and engagement was smooth.</p> <p>PHBS-UK plans for admissions systems are set out in agreements with other partner universities and are clear in providing the role which each University has to play in the admissions process. In this way, the assessment team was assured that the plans are robust and credible and there are established policies for the recruitment and admission of</p>
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				<p>students. These were considered by the assessment team to be reliable, fair and inclusive, because academic merit and the students' ability to succeed on the programme forms the basis for admissions decisions.</p> <p>Admissions records demonstrate that PHBS-UK's policies are implemented in practice and the sample tested by the assessment team contained no evidence of minor omissions or oversights. This is because from the admissions records assessed, decisions were made in line with the PHBS-UK admissions criteria. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p>
Q2	The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.	Met	High	<p>PHBS-UK has robust and credible plans for designing and delivering high-quality courses, and its policies for course design and delivery facilitate the provision of high-quality courses. This is demonstrated in the planned arrangements for joint working with, for example, [REDACTED]. Its approved documentation indicates that teaching, learning and assessment design enable students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. The external examiner also confirms that the courses concerned are high quality.</p> <p>Based on the evidence presented, the assessment team determined that PHBS-UK's set of regulations and policies for course design and delivery facilitate the delivery of high-quality courses. In particular, students tend to regard their courses as being of high quality, especially around the integration of teaching and assessment, but more broadly in their appraisal of teaching. Staff understand what 'high quality' means in the context of PHBS-UK and are confident how the provision meets that definition.</p> <p>Observations of teaching and learning demonstrate clarity of objectives, good planning and organisation, a sound method or approach, good delivery, appropriate content, effective use of</p>

				resources and student engagement. Therefore, the assessment team concludes, based on the evidence described above, 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	<p>PHBS-UK's approach to recruitment demonstrates that staff have been recruited, appointed, inducted and supported according to regulations or policies, and in line with job description equivalents. Regulations and policies, including those for diversity and equality in recruitment of staff were demonstrably operational and effective, and sufficient to ensure that there are appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.</p> <p>Students agree that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience and emphasised this point consistently in their written and verbal evidence to the team.</p> <p>Teaching observations demonstrated that staff were appropriately skilled to deliver a high-quality learning experience. Classes were well prepared and well organised, and the teaching staff used technology effectively, and communicated clearly. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p>
Q4	The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.	Met	High	<p>Strategies and plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes for students. In particular, plans for a significant enhancement of premises are well advanced, and proportionate in relation to the proposed expansion of the student cohort, providing support facilities both academic and pastoral that are clearly student-focused. The demonstrable improvements to existing resources such as the recruitment of a personal trainer for students demonstrates that PHBS-UK is responsive to the views of students and staff in this regard.</p>

				<p>Students praised the facilities available to them, confirming that they are more than sufficient and appropriate for their needs.</p> <p>Staff met by the assessment team understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to the provision, maintenance and upkeep of resources, and the assessment team's own assessment of the facilities and learning resources confirms they are of high quality, and sufficient both in quantity and quality for the needs of the student cohort. PHBS-UK has dedicated policies and processes that clearly address and provide facilities for students with specific needs. Therefore, the assessment team concludes that the Core practice is met.</p>
Q5	The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.	Met	High	<p>The assessment team formed the view that PHBS-UK actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. Arrangements in place are contextualised to the size of the current student cohort, which facilitates the use of informal and formal contact between students and staff teams. There are numerous examples of PHBS-UK changing and improving students' learning experience as a result of student engagement in both academic and non-academic matters, including changes to the duration of lectures, and improvement of facilities for resident students. Students confirmed that they have numerous opportunities to provide feedback via the bi-annual 'Town Hall' meetings, Staff-Student Liaison meetings and through course evaluations. Students reported that PHBS-UK engages them in the quality of their learning experience, that they find staff approachable and feel that their feedback is listened to and acted upon. In meetings with the assessment team students demonstrated how engaged they are with their learning and the quality of their educational experience.</p> <p>PHBS-UK's approach to engaging students is robust and credible, and structured in line with the Governance Code of</p>

				Practice. Arrangements in place are demonstrably effective in engaging students in the quality of their education and provide for students' views and feedback on academic and pastoral matters to be collected, considered and acted upon. There are complementary channels by which students are advised of the matters raised, and the actions taken. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the 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	<p>PHBS-UK has developed fair, transparent and accessible complaints and appeals procedures that are robust and credible. This is because they have a Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure in place, they understand the requirements, and the contract between PHBS-UK and the University (Business School) in China enables English requirements to take precedence. PHBS-UK procedures for handling complaints and appeals are definitive, fair and transparent, and the team considers that these would deliver timely outcomes in the event of a formal complaint or appeal being made.</p> <p>To date, PHBS-UK has not had to deal with any formal complaints and appeals. Students who met the team, supported by evidence in the student submission, were unanimous that the systems were fair, transparent and accessible, and that the difference between complaints and appeals was clear.</p> <p>PHBS-UK's procedures for handling complaints and appeals are accessible to students. This is because they are provided to students both via the student handbook and on the internet for easy access. Taking the foregoing into account, the assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p>
Q8	Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place	Met	High	PHBS-UK's approach to its arrangements with the University (Business School) is governed by the agreement between both

	<p>effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.</p>			<p>centres, which provides for an independent Academic Board to monitor standards and quality and maintain the responsibility for ensuring compliance with both the UK's higher education regulatory framework and the academic regulations of the University (Business School). PHBS-UK's responsibilities under this agreement include, among other things, the establishment and maintenance of the quality of its campus, staff, courses and the student experience.</p> <p>An independent Academic Board is established within PHBS-UK and approved by the University (Business School) in accordance with its binding obligations to provide the necessary infrastructure for it to operate in line with academic regulations. The development of additional England- specific policies and procedures by PHBS-UK provides additional reference points for ensuring the quality of its existing and planned courses and programmes. The team concluded that these arrangements are clear and comprehensive and operate in line with its governance and policy requirements.</p> <p>Senior, academic and professional support staff explained how they worked successfully with the University (Business School). Senior staff clarified their role in the initiation of new partners and new courses. Academic staff explained how they participated in strategic committee meetings with the University (Business School), and independently shaped the teaching and learning for their teaching sessions to meet the contextual priorities of their students. Senior staff clarified their role in the initiation of new partners and new courses. University (Business School) staff confirmed their role in reviewing programmes and approving new courses and partners. The team was satisfied that staff from both PHBS-UK and the University (Business School) fully understand their individual</p>
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				<p>and collective responsibilities for ensuring the high quality delivery of courses offered at the former.</p> <p>PHBS-UK's involvement in the planned partnerships with the three UK universities has been in the development and arrangements for their potential delivery at its campus. All of these established and proposed partnership arrangements address and allocate responsibilities for ensuring the maintenance of high-quality learning experiences for potential students. They include comprehensive consideration of appropriate governance structures, and operational responsibilities for all matters relating to the management and monitoring of learning, teaching and assessment experiences. The team therefore determined that these arrangements are robust and sufficiently credible to ensure a high-quality academic experience for students on its current and potential future courses and programmes.</p> <p>External examiner reports confirm that the quality of the courses that PHBS-UK offers is high in terms of teaching, learning and assessment. Positive comments are noted especially in relation to the supportiveness of assessment processes and the consistent and helpful student feedback practices all of which lead to positive external examiner reports. Therefore, the assessment team concludes that the Core practice is met.</p>
Q9	The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.	Met	High	The assessment team concluded that PHBS-UK supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. This is because assessed student work demonstrates that students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback. Staff (both academic and professional support) understand their role in supporting student achievement and provide support and development opportunities through curricular and extracurricular activities.

			<p>Students tend to agree that they are adequately supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. This is because they receive helpful feedback from tutors on both mid-term and end-of-term assessments, which both supports their learning and helps them to improve future assessed work.</p> <p>PHBS-UK's approach to student support facilitates successful academic and professional outcomes because there are policies in place to underpin student support and staffing resources to support students. These include a dedicated Student Experience and Support Manager, supported by a comprehensive student handbook, underpinned by operational processes. There are a series of curricular and extracurricular activities which focus on providing support to students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. These include academic writing, company visits, seminars from industry professionals and IT-based support. Based upon all of the foregoing, the assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.</p>
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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 March 2022 for PHBS-UK.

A Quality and Standards Review (QSR) is a method of assessment QAA uses to provide the 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 assessment team's decisions about the provider's 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 assessment was:

Name: Professor Steven Bradley
Institution: Durham University
Role in assessment team: Institutional assessor

Name: Ms Helen Collinson
Institution: University Academy '92
Role in assessment team: Institutional assessor

Name: Professor Liz Crolley
Institution: University of Liverpool
Role in assessment team: Subject assessor

The QAA officer for the assessment was: Dr Roshani Swift.

The size and composition of this assessment team is in line with published guidance and, as such, comprises 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 assessment to identify and resolve any possible conflicts of interest.

About PHBS-UK

Peking University HSBC Business School-UK Campus (PHBS-UK) is registered in the UK as a 'company limited by guarantee', which admitted its first student intake in March 2018, and has a mission to operate as a small postgraduate provider of business education. Qualifications are awarded by Peking University, and to reflect both this and the closeness of the ties between PHBS-UK and the Peking University HSBC Business School, the organisation will be referred to as the University (Business School). All teaching in the UK takes place at the PHBS-UK building located just outside Oxford.

PHBS-UK is overseen by a Board of Directors, consisting of the Dean of the University (Business School), the Head of PHBS-UK, and other senior academics of the University (Business School). The Head of PHBS-UK is responsible for operation and academic development, and for the standards and quality assurance of the courses delivered. Oversight of standards and quality is maintained by the Academic Board, which includes senior academics from English universities.

The Course Portfolio [REDACTED] is scheduled below, and it should be noted that the cross-border provision has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The MA in Management students, for example, would normally study the first year in the UK and the second year in Peking, but, because of the travel restrictions in force, arrangements were made for both years to be studied in the UK.

Course	Awarding Body	Student Numbers (FT) Year 1	Student Numbers (FT) Year 2	Total Student Numbers
MA in Finance	Peking University	6	4	10
MA in Management	Peking University	7	2	9
International MBA (commenced 21-22 academic year)	Peking University	3	0	3

The provider also offers a short-term study programme but due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions, this programme currently has no registered students. The short visiting study programme offers an opportunity for Peking University students to study abroad at the UK campus for a short period, ranging between one term (10 weeks) to two terms (20 weeks). During their visiting study, students take courses taught at the UK campus and gain academic credits for these courses which are transferable as part of their total credits achieved towards the award of the requisite University (Business School) degree.

The main partnership arrangement in place at present is with Peking University, who are the awarding body. The arrangements in place provide for the students to study the first year of their MA programme in the UK, and the second year in China, (although as noted above these arrangements have been impacted by the pandemic). Plans are in place to develop this arrangement in such a way as to enable PHBS-UK to have greater autonomy, and greater responsibility for the provision which it delivers.

The first of these planned developments is to offer an International Legal Practice LLM and Business Communication Study Programme from September 2022 and is being undertaken as a direct agreement between the [REDACTED] and PHBS-UK. The second is with the [REDACTED], beginning again in September 2022, to deliver an International MBA Co-Operative Programme, involving the MBA programme presently provided by PHBS-UK and a certificate in Mandarin Chinese and inter-cultural communication from [REDACTED]. The third development, currently in abeyance, is for PHBS-UK to deliver a one-year module in informatics science as part of existing [REDACTED] programmes in Financial Investment, Management or Economics.

The approach of the team to this review has been to assess the provider as both a current and established entity in its own right, albeit with a small provision, and also as a prospective provider based upon the existing substantive plans for expansion and growth in the future. Throughout this report the assessment team sought to assess equivalence in terms of English sector-recognised standards and approaches to course design and assessment, awards and classifications.

Specific terminology used by PHBS-UK includes the term 'programme' to describe a 'course'; and the word 'course' to describe a single 'module'.

How the assessment was conducted

The assessment 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 assessment team. However, for this assessment it was clear that the provider does not offer a research degree programme. Therefore, the assessment 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 assessment team considered a range of evidence that was submitted prior to the assessment visit and evidence gathered at the assessment visit itself. [Annex 1] To ensure that the assessment team focused on the principles embedded in the Core practices, and that the evidence considered was assessed in a way that is clear and consistent with all other assessments, the team utilised Annex 4 of the Guidance for Providers to construct this report and detail the key pieces of evidence seen. Annex 4 expects that assessment teams will sample certain types of key evidence using a combination of representative sampling, risk-based sampling and randomised sampling. In this assessment, the team sampled the following areas for evidence for the reasons given below:

- A random sample of assessed student work from the academic year 2021-22 was selected, comprising five pieces from an overall sample of 15. The sample was used to test that students' assessed work reflects the relevant threshold standards; that marks and awards given to students are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.
- The assessment team observed a sample of three different teaching sessions covering Research Methods, Artificial Intelligence Analytics and Corporate Finance courses, which represent a range of modules in different subject areas.
- Sampling of admissions records was based on a small sample of four admissions records, both successful and unsuccessful. Because the records are maintained in China, and because the pandemic restrictions there prevent staff from entering the University (Business School) campus, no larger sample could be obtained.

Further details of all the evidence the assessment team considered are provided in Annex 1 of this report.

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 assessment 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).

How any samples of evidence were constructed

4 A random sample of assessed student work from the academic year 2021-22 was selected comprising five pieces from an overall sample of 15.

What the evidence shows

5 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

6 PHBS-UK's approach to academic standards for the courses it offers which lead to postgraduate awards from the University is set out within its comprehensive academic regulations [006] which have been approved by the Academic Board which is appointed by the University (Business School) in accordance with its binding obligations and reflected within the agreement between the two parties. [118] PHBS-UK's academic regulations [006] are comprehensive because they include detailed information on academic governance arrangements, including academic standards relating to progression, marking and grade descriptors, award of credits and functions of the examination board. The courses taught at PHBS-UK lead to three cross-border postgraduate awards comprising the MA in Finance, the MA in Management, and the International Master in Business Administration. They are described as cross-border because students have the opportunity to study in the UK for the first year with the second year in China. These regulations [006] state that standards are set in line with the regulatory and other requirements of relevant national qualifications' frameworks and sector-recognised standards of both England and the University. They confirm that the award of credits for courses successfully completed at PHBS-UK contribute to the relevant University Postgraduate Awards, [006] and the assessment team saw details of this within the graduate transcripts and examination board minutes for the last three academic years. [051] These regulations highlight, however, that the decisions on the awarding of the master's degree are made by the Academic Board of the University (Business School).

7 The PHBS-UK academic regulations [006] and the programme handbook [057] provide details on each of the programmes showing that each course offered by PHBS-UK amounts generally to 3 credits (with some courses such as research methodologies amounting to 1.5 credits). These contribute to the two MA awards for which the University requires an overall 42 credits of compulsory courses and 12 optional courses totalling 54 credits (plus an uncredited dissertation); and to the International MBA award requiring 36 compulsory credits and 14 credits from selective courses totalling 50 credits (plus an uncredited dissertation). Therefore a master's degree is awarded to a student who has passed either course equivalent to 54 credits at master's level (50 credits for MBA) and passed a dissertation defence within their agreed programme of study. The assessment team can confirm that the above is equivalent to FHEQ Level 7 of the sector-recognised standards of 180 credits. If a student fails to complete the programme, they are issued with a Certificate of Studies for any modules completed, but this is not an award. [109] However, the assessment team saw evidence that PHBS-UK has plans to introduce other exit awards which are consistent with the FHEQ in line with sector-recognised standards. [124]

8 The agreement with the University [118] requires PHBS-UK to be responsible for the management of quality and standards of its courses and to establish effective examination procedures for the courses it delivers. This agreement [118] provides for the establishment of a governance structure, including a PHBS-UK Academic Board with independent members for the effective management of the standards and quality of its courses in line with both the OfS regulatory framework and University rules. The terms of reference for this Board [004] recognise this by requiring it to be responsible for monitoring and upholding the academic standards of the courses it offers leading to University awards. This responsibility includes the periodic review of courses and approval of academic regulations and changes to them. The assessment team saw evidence of this Board's operation in its minutes, [025] which include discussions on the changes to marking protocols to both reflect online assessment practices and to address the current pandemic priorities.

9 PHBS-UK's assessment policy [008] takes into account the requirements for OfS Conditions of registration, and those of the University. This policy recognises the priority for assessments to be both valid and reliable and provides for standards to be maintained through both internal and external verification and protocols for addressing assessment offences. This policy implements the requirements of PHBS-UK's academic regulations [006] and informs and is informed by the Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures, [005] Moderation Policy, [010] Learning Support Policy, [003] Course Lecturer's Handbook [042] and information on external examiner roles and responsibilities. [009] PHBS-UK's academic regulations [006] incorporate both the marking requirements within Chinese higher education practice [109] and higher education practices in England (sector-recognised standards), by incorporating different mark schemes or scoring systems. PHBS-UK's academic regulations [006] include a grading scheme which aligns marks for threshold levels measured against knowledge and understanding; practical skills including reasoning; cognitive skills including application of evidence; transferable skills including structure and presentation; and subject-specific criteria.

10 The assessment team determined that the dual layers of regulation are being used effectively to distinguish between the University regulations [109] and English sector-recognised standards reflected within PHBS-UK's academic regulations. [006] The assessment team found that PHBS UK's academic regulations [006] and associated assessment policies provide an established framework for supporting its approaches to course and assessment design, marking and moderation, and classifications, and are effective in maintaining threshold standards in line with both English sector-recognised standards and those of the University. PHBS-UK plans to further strengthen its approaches to maintaining academic standards including English threshold standards for its existing and

planned curriculum by increasing the number of external examiners and appointing a quality adviser.

11 PHBS-UK has been involved in the development of new programmes with three UK universities. The first planned development is between PHBS-UK and the [REDACTED] for a full-time 20-month programme in law for international students, including those with no legal background, leading to a solicitors' qualification in the UK, commencing in September 2022. [052c] Students who complete this programme will be awarded a [REDACTED] MA in Law (LLM), a Certificate of Solicitor Qualification and Certificate of English Proficiency for Legal Professions. The study plan will operate in two stages focusing respectively on the Legal Foundation and Business Communication Study at stage one and the LLM and Solicitor Qualification at stage two. Progression from stage one to stage two requires IELTSs overall at 7.0, and seven of eight Foundation law courses passed at grade D (40%) or above. At stage two the existing threshold standards and grade classifications of the [REDACTED] will apply, and will be confirmed by external examiners and examination boards at both stages. [REDACTED] staff will oversee the delivery by both [REDACTED] and PHBS-UK staff of the Law courses to ensure at both stages there is compliance with [REDACTED]'s quality and standards frameworks. A Joint Programme Management Board will be established between [REDACTED] and PHBS-UK to oversee management of strategic issues and priorities in relation to quality and standards. It will be chaired jointly by the Head of PHBS-UK and the Academic Coordinator from [REDACTED] and will involve further relevant representation from both institutions. [052c]

12 PHBS-UK's involvement in the next planned development is as the UK's delivery arm for the PHBS-[REDACTED] International MBA agreed in a signed Memorandum of Agreement on 19 January 2022 between the University and the [REDACTED]. [052b] When students successfully complete this MBA programme they will be awarded a Peking University International MBA and a [REDACTED] Certificate in Chinese Language and Culture for business. The programme will involve two years of part-time postgraduate study of the MBA courses at PHBS-UK and the Chinese Language courses at [REDACTED] and will focus on enabling graduates to situate their study within the MBA courses to real Chinese business contexts. The Memorandum confirms the rules of each University covering matters such as applicable laws, policies and procedures which will apply to their respective programmes. The threshold standards set for these MBA courses are in line with those currently delivered at PHBS-UK, (hence in line with the English sector-recognised standards) and those for the [REDACTED] qualification apply the standards currently operating for this programme. In order to oversee the quality and standards the parties plan to set up a Partnership Academic Board and two examination boards (one for the MBA courses and the other for [REDACTED] courses), ready for commencement in September 2022. [052b]

13 The final arrangement is between Peking University and [REDACTED] for a joint interdisciplinary programme involving two or three years' postgraduate study, allowing Peking University students the opportunity to undertake a one-year full-time study of informatics at PHBS-UK during their two or three years' postgraduate study in China. [052a] The teaching and learning of informatics will be delivered by PHBS-UK and will apply the threshold standards and curriculum of [REDACTED]. The Quality Control and Management arrangements propose the establishment of a Joint Academic Board to oversee the management of the programme and the examination board to making award decisions. However, at present this proposed development is in abeyance pending further discussions. [052a]

14 The assessment team saw evidence of PHBS-UK 's ongoing engagement in all three of these developments within the minutes of its Academic Board [025] and the staff meetings, which provide evidence that staff are fully aware of them. [125] The assessment

team determined that PHBS-UK has credible plans for strengthening the operation of its current courses by further developing externality. Its plans to broaden its curriculum base through the above arrangements ensures that threshold standards are set in line with sector-recognised standards in England.

15 PHBS-UK's approved programme information is included within programme handbooks, [057] which include details of programme and module specifications. The student handbook [085b] provides details on the courses and also signposts key information regarding assessment including information on marking and grading. The Course Lecturers Handbook [055] also includes this information, together with a sample syllabus template to guide tutors in devising learning goals and assessment tasks; along with a grading rubric which explains the criteria for achievement at threshold level. This information is further augmented by explanations within the academic regulations [006] and assessment policy, [008] which collectively represent a clearly defined approach to articulating curriculum and assessment requirements. Programme specifications of all three programmes currently delivered indicate credit structures and a set of clearly defined threshold-level learning outcomes.

16 Course specifications include mapping of programme learning outcomes to each course, a syllabus outline, assessment outline, assessment details including grading and classifications and expected reading. For example, the programme handbook for the MA in Finance and MA in Management programmes [057] includes programme specifications which incorporate programme objectives, credits, learning outcomes, a list of the range of assessments, and other key information. Course outlines, for example, Corporate Finance and Academic Writing [041] provide a similar course overview/description, mapping of the programme intended learning outcomes onto the course, and assessment information. The assessment team's review of the virtual learning environment (VLE) [F01] provided further evidence of the consistent approach PHBS takes in ensuring the programme and course information is accessible to those who need to refer to them and aligns to English sector-recognised standards.

17 Learning outcomes are established at both programme and course (module) level, although the team saw evidence within the minutes of staff meetings [126] that there is some flexibility within the syllabus to contextualise delivery, for example through different student activities. Programme documentation, including PHBS-UK's assessment moderation requirements, [Moderation Policy and Procedure 010] prioritises the requirement for staff to provide marking criteria and, where marking issues are identified, for appropriate checking of standards to take place and that the outcomes resulting from the moderation process are used to maintain academic standards. The Quality Manual [079] informs programme documents by focusing on English sector-recognised standards and provides appropriate guidance (cross-referenced with conditions of registration set out in the Office for Students' regulatory framework), ensuring that programmes meet relevant threshold levels in line with English sector-recognised standards. Based on its scrutiny of the above evidence the assessment team determined that specified threshold standards within course documentation are consistent with both English sector-recognised standards and those of the University.

18 The external examiner reports [054a] confirm the opportunity to comment on standards and their appropriateness, and the template report itself requires confirmation that standards are consistent with threshold levels within English sector-recognised standards. For example, the assessment team saw evidence within examination board minutes [035; 042] of confirmation by the external examiner that sample student work examined shows that achievement at threshold standards comparable to English sector-recognised standards has been attained. [54b] The assessment team determined that the external examiner is satisfied that threshold standards achieved by students are comparable with those relating to

English sector-recognised standards.

19 The sample of assessment showed that student work reflects the threshold standards because it had been marked using the grading schemes outlined in the academic regulations. [006] For example, student work marked at C grade was equivalent to a mark in the 50s for a taught postgraduate module, and those marked at this threshold grade were comparable in standard to an English threshold award at FHEQ Level 7. The assessment team also saw student work which contained evidence of plagiarism which was marked with an F grade (a clear fail) confirming that credit is only awarded when threshold levels within English sector-recognised standards are met. The sample also shows that students are able to deal with advanced and complex business problems and that language used to describe threshold-level learning outcomes is comparable with Level 7 within sector-recognised standards. [S01] Based on the above findings, the assessment team can confirm that assessed student work demonstrates that relevant threshold standards comparable to Level 7 of the English sector-recognised standards are achieved.

20 In meeting with the assessment team, staff were able to explain their approach to maintaining threshold standards and the different policy documents they access to guide and support them in their teaching and assessment tasks. [M01; M02] Senior staff spoke of how all staff were provided with course documentation produced by the University (Business School) [M01] and academic staff confirmed that they understand their responsibility for maintaining standards when teaching and assessing. [M02] All staff were very clear about what is expected from them in terms of internal and external moderation of academic standards at threshold and above. [M01; M02] For example, academic staff explained how they ensured that the high standards of the student dissertations are maintained by ensuring that they are publishable and how the system of moderation supports this. [M02] They articulated the purpose of internal moderations and the role of the internal moderator in assessing standards and the need for further external examiner confirmation of grades and student achievements within examination boards. They explained how they used marking criteria to ensure that students achieve threshold standards for the courses studied before credits are allocated. Further, the senior staff pointed out that teaching staff, including hourly paid staff, were highly experienced in UK higher education teaching and assessing, with some of the hourly paid staff working concurrently within other higher education providers. In discussions with staff in all meetings they were able to explain how they worked with both the University rules and the English regulatory requirements for setting and maintaining academic standards. On the basis of discussions with staff, the assessment team determined that they fully understand the requirements of, and comparative application of, both the English higher education thresholds for sector-recognised standards and those of the University.

Conclusions

21 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

22 From the evidence provided, the assessment team considers that the standards PHBS-UK has set are in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework. The evidence scrutinised by the team demonstrates that the standards described in the approved course documentation are set at levels that are consistent with these sector-recognised standards and the provider's academic regulations

and policies should ensure the setting and maintenance of academic standards at the relevant threshold level which are consistent with the FHEQ.

23 The team considers that the standards that will be achieved by PHBS-UK's students are expected to be in line with the sector-recognised standards defined in paragraph 342 of the OfS's regulatory framework based on evidence provided as part of this review. The review team considers that the evidence seen demonstrates that the provider's academic regulations and policies should ensure that these standards are maintained. The team concludes that staff fully understand PHBS-UK's approach to maintaining these standards and are committed to applying this approach.

24 PHBS-UK has developed its own academic regulations which have been approved by the Academic Board which is appointed by the University (Business School) in accordance with its binding obligations. These regulations fully embed the English sector-recognised standards and map the University rules against them. PHBS-UK has established an Academic Board to ensure that the academic standards for the programmes meet both those within the English sector-recognised standards and the standards requirements of the University. PHBS-UK has also developed key policies and procedures on assessment, and a quality manual to support the setting and maintenance of academic standards. The assessment team concludes that this documentation confirms that there are clear and comprehensive academic regulations and frameworks to support the setting and maintenance of academic standards at relevant threshold levels, which meet the requirements for higher education sector-recognised standards.

25 PHBS-UK's further plans to strengthen the external scrutiny within its governance structures currently include an Academic Board which oversees quality and standards. PHBS-UK has agreements and implementation plans for the proposed three developments starting in September 2022. The assessment team concludes that these plans confirm that they are detailed in setting out the different stages of development, and the independent governance arrangements to ensure that relevant threshold standards are met. Therefore, the team determined that PHBS-UK's plans for maintaining threshold standards are robust and credible and fully understood by staff.

26 The guidance accompanying programme documentation contained with PHBS-UK's assessment and associated policies and quality manual promote understanding and guide the maintenance of threshold standards in line with English sector-recognised standards.

27 External examiners confirm that standards set in assignments and achieved by students meet threshold standards and are also confirmed to be in line with English sector-recognised standards. The assessment team found that student work demonstrates that credit and qualifications are awarded only where relevant standards are met.

28 Senior, academic and professional support staff fully understand the requirements within the PHBS-UK academic regulations and associated policies and procedures. They were able to explain how they ensured that students were only given credits when they meet the thresholds within English sector-recognised standards and those of the comparable University rules. Based on the scrutiny of the evidence provided, the assessment team concludes that this Core practice is met.

29 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the assessment 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

30 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.

31 The QAA assessment 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).

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

33 There were no third-party endorsements available in this regard.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

34 A random sample of assessed student work from the academic year 2021-22 was selected, comprising five pieces from an overall sample of 15.

What the evidence shows

35 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

36 The (Peking) University academic regulations [109] confirm awards for the master's and MBA degrees that PHBS-UK offers and are awarded by the University as a pass or fail award. Students also achieve a pass or fail in their thesis with no further classification. [109] The degree student transcript seen by the team confirms the University does not rank graduates in terms of award classifications. However, the degree transcript does include grading rubric (Fail, Pass, Average, Good and Outstanding) for the individual courses (modules) totalling 54 credits for the master's programmes and 50 credits for the MBA, linked to a Grade Point Average. [110] The institutional approach to assessment, marking and moderation for these courses is regulated by provisions within PHBS-UK's academic regulations. [006] The term 'assessment' is used within these regulations [006] to indicate any piece of work undertaken by students which is graded and approved by PHBS-UK's examination board, and which contributes to any one of the awards of the MA in Finance, MA in Management, and master's in Business Administration. The assessment team can confirm that the above is equivalent to the credit requirements for a master's programme of 180 credits within English sector-recognised standards.

37 The table included within PHBS-UK's academic regulations clearly explains the grade equivalence between English and Chinese marking practices and presents the different grades under both systems as percentages, corresponding letter grades and linked Grade Point Averages (GPAs). The grading scheme included within these regulations describes the requirements for the different grades at threshold level D, and above threshold levels C, B and A.

38 The tables within these regulations (006;121) also convert the letter grades within the grading scheme to a Grade Point Average (GPA) for both the English and the Chinese systems. For example, for the English system it follows that F =GPA 0, D (threshold level=

GPA 1.0) through to A which equals GPA 4.0. Under University rules a GPA of 1 is equivalent to a Pass, 2 is equivalent to 'Common', 3 is 'Good' and 4 equates to 'Excellent'. In addition to completing all the courses contributing to the respective master's degrees, students also need to pass a dissertation for which they will get a pass or fail. Therefore, at award level the three master's degrees that PHBS-UK offers lead to a pass or fail classification. The assessment team concludes that the arrangements in place are equivalent to outcomes achieved within English higher education providers.

39 PHBS's assessment policy [008] operates as a guide which supports staff in the planning, delivery and assessment of relevant learning outcomes for the courses. It guides course lecturers to set clear assessment tasks and assessment criteria which reflect both levels of study and the disciplinary contexts. This policy prioritises the use of a variety of assessments to ensure that students have the opportunity to achieve the relevant knowledge and skills. The policy also includes information on internal verification and the role of the external examiner to ensure that the grades that students receive appropriately reflect the necessary standards. The information on the moderation process is detailed in the Moderation Policy and Procedure [010] which outlines the expected outcomes from the internal and external moderation processes, including those for reconciling and moderation of student grades. This policy identifies a clear role for both internal and external examiners and that the examination board ensures maintenance of standards at all levels, including those beyond threshold. The template for the grades and moderation form [010] confirms the role of external and internal moderation and requires comments from internal moderators, information on assessment and grading and includes a clear sample grading rubric for class participation ranging from excellent to unsatisfactory, along with guidance for checking examination paper questions. [042d; 042e]

40 The assessment team saw evidence in the examination board minutes of application of this policy to ensure the maintenance of standards where grades above threshold were awarded to students within the different courses. [027; 042d,042e] For example, for the 2019-20 examination board minutes [027] and the moderation reports [030] for the International Finance course, the internal moderator emphasised the significance of remaining consistent and the external examiner confirmed that the marks consistently aligned with the grading table. The team also saw evidence of adjustments made to marks, for example with the Microeconomics/Managerial Economics Course. The assessment team's scrutiny of the above evidence confirms that PHBS-UK's academic regulations and associated policies which inform course and assessment design, marking and moderations provide an appropriate infrastructure to ensure that the standards of courses which PHBS-UK offers are maintained beyond threshold levels and are reasonably comparable with those achieved by other higher education providers in England.

41 PHBS-UK's plans to set and maintain comparable standards with other English higher education providers for its current courses are to be strengthened further by the appointment of more external examiners and an independent Quality Assurance Advisor to support both quality and standards. [122] For the three new postgraduate developments with [REDACTED], [REDACTED], the plans for the maintenance of standards above threshold levels for the courses are covered within the respective proposals. All proposals require the establishment of joint arrangements to oversee the academic standards of the programmes, including those relating to standards above threshold. For example, for the [REDACTED] proposal, the implementation plans are credible and clearly confirm that a [REDACTED] examination board will decide on the outcomes for the LLM course, arrange for external examination, manage the examination in line with its examination and assessment policy, and make grading decisions. All three of these developments have detailed plans which credibly identify and establish stages for the development of the different actions for implementation, including staffing, resources and delivery mechanisms. These include the establishment of academic governance and programme management arrangements to recognise the significance of

maintaining comparable and contextual academic standards including those at threshold and above for the respective provision. The assessment team therefore determined that PHBS-UK has robust evidence-informed plans to strengthen externality for its current courses, and to provide credible oversight of comparable academic standards including those for ensuring above threshold levels for all three proposals which are currently at different stages of development.

42 The assessment team's scrutiny of the programme handbook [057] confirms that it includes general information on curriculum and intended learning outcomes which the assessment team found requires the development of 'advanced knowledge, understanding and leadership, and innovative capabilities and analytical abilities'. [057] The grading schemes [006] provide further strong evidence of equivalence between standards above threshold between PHBS-UK's courses and those within other higher education providers. For example, the criteria to achieve 60% or 70% for the University degrees reflect comparability with other English higher education provider grade descriptors for merit and distinction respectively. In this respect, the criteria for the higher grades for PHBS-UK's courses which require 'a sophisticated breadth and depth of knowledge and thought, clear and critical insight, or exceptional knowledge and understanding', were considered by the team to be significantly beyond threshold level. [006] The marking schemes and grade descriptors are also detailed and appropriate in distinguishing between grades for fail, threshold level and above. The above threshold levels use descriptors and grades that require higher levels of achievement, and make reference to, for example, the need for 'creativity, originality, and highly developed reasoning', which are all characteristics that are typical of those required to be achieved within other English providers.

43 The assessment team's scrutiny of the operation of PHBS-UK's Moderation Policy and Processes found that moderation reports and the minutes [030] are detailed and appropriate in distinguishing between grades for fail, threshold level and above, and contain descriptors that indicate a high level of achievement above threshold. The grading schemes share language in common with the FHEQ descriptors for Level 7 at a typical level: for example, references to 'creativity', 'originality', 'highly-developed reasoning', 'well-developed initiative', are characteristics that are typical of those achieved within other English providers. Minutes of the examination board meetings [051.054] show consistent reflection and application of moderation outcomes in deliberation on student achievement of standards beyond threshold levels, and confirmation that these standards are comparable to those achieved within other English higher education providers. For example, the team saw evidence of consistent oversight and confirmation of achievement of standards above threshold levels, and where moderation identified inconsistencies they were rectified within the moderation meetings. The assessment team's review of minutes of examination boards for the last three years [054] also provided evidence of specific approaches taken within examination board meetings to ensure equivalence with comparable standards achieved within other English providers. [054b] The assessment team determined from scrutiny of these documents that outcomes from the board ensured that standards achieved above threshold levels within PHBS-UK's courses are equivalent to those achieved within other higher education providers.

44 PHBS-UK has established its own Programme and Course Approval Policy and Procedure [011] which outlines the process for the approval of new programmes. Its approach to the annual review of courses is recognised within its External Examiners and Examination Board Terms of Reference [009] and the assessment team saw evidence of this in documentation relating to review of the Cross Border Programme Annual Report for PHBS-UK courses. [037] This report shows details on individual student progression and achievements aligned to GPAs which incorporate achievement of standards above threshold levels. The implementation documentation for the new developments with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] also clearly identifies the rules on setting and maintenance of standards beyond

threshold where relevant, and there are credible plans in place to ensure the appropriate oversight of standards within each of these proposals. The assessment team saw additional evidence of PHBS-UK's plans to further strengthen its annual course monitoring approaches by modifying its current approaches to accommodate the requirements of the partner universities within its planned review of the enhancement of quality and standards management. [122]

45 The approved course information on standards, including those beyond threshold, is also detailed and shared with staff in the course lecturer handbook [055] and the student handbook. [065b] Both documents provide information on, among other things, the criteria for grading achievement above threshold level and their alignment with comparable English higher education contexts. The assessment team concluded that the approved documentation incorporates standards beyond threshold which meet the requirements of the University rules and are comparable to those applied within other English higher education providers.

46 The PHBS's external examiner reports and comments in examination boards provide external confirmation that standards achieved above threshold levels within PHBS-UK's courses are in line with respective marking descriptors and equivalent to those achieved within other English higher education providers. [054] For example, in the minutes of the examination board (February 2020) the external examiner confirmed that 'Sample papers are good and comparable' with English threshold standards. [054a, 054b] Further, the external examiner report for 2021-22 Block 1 [054a] confirms that the nature and level of the tasks set are appropriate; marking consistently reflects student achievements; aligns fully with the standard conversion table comparing marks awarded in England and Chinese letter grades within academic regulations; and that standards achieved continue to be in line with Level 7 FHEQ standards. The assessment team formed the view that external examiners agree that standards achieved beyond threshold levels within PHBS-UK's students are reasonably comparable with those achieved by other English higher education providers and that grades and credits for courses are only given to students when these standards are achieved.

47 The assessment team's scrutiny of sample student work provided verifies that grades given to students, and reflected as a GPA on their transcript of studies, are reasonably comparable to those in other English providers because there was a consistent approach to applying both the marking systems and the grading descriptors provided in the academic regulations. [006] The evidence from the analysis of the sample of assessed work showed that marks of A or A+ were only awarded for the strongest pieces of work and those that fit the descriptors at the top end of the grading scheme. For example, while there was relatively little qualitative feedback in the sample, where it existed there was consistency in the terminology used between the assessed work at the highest level and descriptors that relate to 'originality', 'consistent line of critical and evaluative argument', or strong evidence of 'independent investigation'. Where no qualitative feedback was present, the quality of the work clearly matched the criteria for the grade awarded: for example, work that was of a B standard was described as using 'a good range of sources...usually beyond the set range', with 'good theoretical and conceptual analysis'. These are descriptors that are consistent with 60-70 (B) in the grading criteria. The assessment team agreed that these descriptors are consistent with both PHBS-UK's marking descriptors and those used at FHEQ Level 7 and comparable to those achieved within other higher education providers. The assessment team could therefore confirm that assessed student work shows that marks and grades awarded are reasonably comparable to those in other higher education providers.

48 Students who met the team were clear about how marks are awarded [M03] because they informed the assessment team that they know that a grade A is a sign of excellence and that B is good. In the meeting, [M03] students were fully aware of the grading

schemes and conversion schemes and that staff could choose between using a Chinese or an English marking system (equivalent to Level 7 FHEQ), and how they were applied. They confirmed that they understand the process and that staff make it clear which marking schemes they use and usually they receive a letter grade and are clear about what this means. Students were confident the marking schemes enable them to understand what is required to meet standards above threshold. They are also aware that their GPA will appear in their transcript of study and were able to explain how it will be calculated. [M03] Students are clear about what is required on each course to reach standards above threshold and are able to explain the grading protocols and confirmed that they are fully committed to achieve high standards. The assessment team concluded that students fully understand what is expected of them to achieve standards beyond threshold.

49 Senior academic and professional support staff [M01; M02] are fully aware of the institutional approach to grading above threshold, and marking schemes in operation, as outlined within PHBS-UK's academic regulations. They were able to articulate which scheme they use (English or Chinese) and how they convert the marks into a letter grade. They are also fully aware that A equates to 'excellence' and B to 'good'. [M02] They explained how they design assessments and mark them in order to ensure that only the highest achievers will obtain an A grade. [M02] They confirmed that they ensure that students are prepared to achieve beyond threshold levels and commented that the current cohort of students were exceptionally talented and that they expect them to perform above threshold level. [M02] Staff confirm that they fully understand and apply approaches required within PHBS-UK's academic regulations for ensuring that threshold standards set are comparable to those achieved in other higher education providers in England.

Conclusions

50 As described above, the assessment team considered all the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

51 Based on the evidence presented, the assessment team determined that the standards set for students to achieve beyond the threshold on the provider's courses are reasonably comparable with those set by other English providers. The team considered that the approved programme documentation and the provider's academic regulations and policies should ensure that sector-recognised standards are maintained appropriately.

52 PHBS-UK's academic regulations clearly and comprehensively establish the framework for supporting the maintenance of academic standards at threshold and beyond for the courses it offers. It has developed specific academic governance arrangements which have been approved by the University (Business School) in accordance with its binding obligations to ensure these standards are comparable with those achieved in other English providers. The academic regulations include a table which clearly explains the application of grade equivalence between English and Chinese marking systems.

53 PHBS-UK plans to strengthen externality by appointing additional external examiners and an external quality adviser to further improve oversight on achievement of comparable standards for its existing courses and the planned developments with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The assessment team saw evidence of detailed and credible implementation plans with specific arrangements for robust independent oversight of maintenance of comparable standards.

54 External examiner reports and scrutiny of examination board minutes confirm that external examiners are satisfied that standards above threshold are aligned appropriately with grade descriptions.

55 Assessed student work confirms that students are given opportunities to achieve levels beyond threshold level. The work also shows that the students achieve these levels which are comparable to those achieved in other English higher education providers. The assessment team saw evidence that demonstrates that credit for each course and grades are only given when the students meet the required standards and grades are only awarded when students meet the relevant grade descriptor.

56 Staff fully understand PHBS-UK's academic regulations and approaches to maintaining standards for its courses. They understand the dual marking systems covering both English and Chinese higher education assessment practice and are able to successfully apply them when setting and maintaining standards at threshold and above.

57 Students were able to explain what they were required to do to reach standards beyond threshold level and confirmed the commitment to achieve high standards. They agree that they have had helpful guidance from the start of the course to help them understand the dual system of marking and were fully satisfied with this approach.

58 Therefore, the assessment 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 English providers and this Core practice is met.

59 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the assessment 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

60 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.

61 The QAA assessment 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).

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

63 There are no instances of third-party endorsements in relation to these arrangements.

How any samples of evidence were constructed

64 A sample of assessed student work was selected providing all components of assessment for three courses (modules), of three credits each. The sample covered both quantitative and qualitative modules to verify the application of the marking criteria on different types of modules. It included a minimum of three students on each course: at least one at threshold level for each course, as well as a failure, where applicable (one module only).

What the evidence shows

65 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

66 The agreement between the University (Business School) and PHBS-UK provides for the provision of educational services from the PHBS-UK campus and confirms that the agreement is to be determined in accordance with English law. [118] Under this agreement PHBS-UK has established an Academic Board [004] comprising independent members drawn from UK universities to ensure compliance with English standards. The terms of reference for the Academic Board [004] confirm its responsibility for monitoring academic standards of the courses offered within PHBS-UK on behalf of the University. For example, the minutes of the Academic Board [033f] evidence deliberations on the standardisation of student participation marks and marking schemes for students engaged in online delivery to establish expected baseline standards.

67 Further, the PHBS-UK Programme and Course Approval Policy and Procedure [011] incorporates guidelines for the approval of new courses to be delivered by PHBS-UK. These guidelines require programmes to comply with English regulations and the standards of the proposed UK partner University Award. For example, they incorporate a two-stage course approval process whereby PHBS-UK reviews aspects of overall academic rigour, curriculum quality, and teaching and learning approaches followed by the relevant awarding body making decisions on academic standards and the award of credits. This policy [011] also aligns to the comprehensive draft PHBS-UK Policy for Development of New Collaborative Programmes [116] which accommodates the regulatory requirements of both

England and the University awards when developing programmes under collaborative partnerships. The assessment team found that this policy is comprehensive because it requires curriculum development proposals to include information on curriculum content, awards and credits, and signifies the role of the Academic Board in approving or rejecting proposals for collaboration.

68 The assessment team scrutinised evidence of PHBS-UK's engagement with three partnership proposals surrounding arrangements between [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The intention is that all three of these commence in September 2022, although as noted, the King's College London development is currently on hold.

69 The PHBS-UK agreement with the [REDACTED] covers the development and delivery of the International Legal Practice LLM and Business Communication study programme aimed at providing law students with legal proficiency and business skills. [052c] Standards are to be addressed by governance arrangements which provide academic oversight of the programmes by a joint Programme Management Board chaired by the Head of PHBS-UK and the Academic Coordinator from [REDACTED], effective from the commencement date (planned to be September 2022). These arrangements enable PHBS-UK to delegate powers to the Academic Coordinator from [REDACTED] and Senior Tutor from PHBS-UK to oversee operational matters, and to delegate to examination boards the responsibilities for addressing teaching delivery, student learning and assessments, and decide on student progression, grades and awards.

70 The Peking University-[REDACTED] development [131] involves delivery of the existing (Peking) University MBA, along with a Chinese language programme from the [REDACTED]. It explicitly includes PHBS-UK as a delivery partner, and it is confirmed within the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that this arrangement covers a jointly coordinated two-year part-time programme of postgraduate study leading to a joint International MBA. This memorandum [131] confirms that PHBS-UK has worked jointly with [REDACTED] in designing the programme on behalf of the University and will be the delivery body for the (Peking) University MBA part of the course, which is a programme it currently delivers. Standards are set respectively by the (Peking) University for the MBA programme and [REDACTED] (for the Chinese language provision). The management and oversight of the joint programme will be undertaken by a joint Programme Academic Board, consisting of two co-directors (one from [REDACTED] and one from PHBS-UK, supported by a senior tutor from each organisation). The MoU establishes the Programme Academic Board for this programme as the highest governing body to oversee programme-related operations such as assessment and students' learning experiences.

71 The assessment team also reviewed the plans for the [REDACTED] partnership proposal for the delivery of the (Peking) University MA in Finance, Management or Economics and the [REDACTED] MSc in Information Science delivered at PHBS-UK's Oxford campus. The academic standards are the responsibilities respectively of (Peking) University for the MA, and [REDACTED] for the MSc. This proposal also confirms the appointment of a Joint Academic Board as the highest governing body for management of the programmes including matters on academic standards and assessment credit transfer requirements.

72 The assessment team concluded that the scrutiny of evidence above, and the underpinning academic governance arrangements, confirms that the engagement of UK universities with responsibility for academic standards demonstrably provides a credible, robust and evidence-informed framework for PHBS-UK to assure the credibility and security of the English sector-recognised standards of the programmes it delivers on behalf of the

awarding bodies.

73 PHBS-UK demonstrated to the assessment team how it considered collaborations and proposals through its deliberative committee structures. For example, the [REDACTED]-Peking University MoU [131] was discussed at the PHBS-UK Academic Board (Board Minutes [033f]) and this was supported in an email from the PHBS-UK Dean's office about approval of the programme [044] in accordance with the Programme and Course Approval Policy and Procedure. [011] The assessment team also saw discussions within the PHBS-UK management team meetings [026] and the Academic Board minutes [033f] confirming that the new [REDACTED] programme is in the final stages of approval to commence in September 2022. The assessment team concluded that the approaches taken by PHBS to maintain and develop new partnerships are in line with the relevant academic regulations and policies.

74 Examination board minutes [033f] provide evidence of deliberations and decisions on student progression and awards taken in line with University regulations. The England-based higher education external examiners appointed for the current PHBS-UK courses confirm that the student performance is good and in line with comparable standards achieved within other English higher education providers and in line with Peking University standards. [009] For example, the examination board meeting minutes [009] evidence positive comments on the mark distribution within the financial markets' module, and consistency in the approach to assessment within the module on academic writing. All planned PHBS-UK arrangements with universities require the appointment of external examiners to confirm standards and quality of the programmes.

75 The assessment team found that the assessed student work [S01] shows that assessment tasks are aligned to relevant learning outcomes and enable students to achieve standards equivalent to English sector-recognised standards and above. For example, within the Corporate Finance and Organisational Behaviour Courses, the assessment team found that student performance was of a high standard and wholly in line with expected learning outcomes.

76 Senior staff [M01] explained the academic governance arrangements within PHBS-UK and the importance of the Academic Board in terms of standards and partnerships. They explained the responsibilities that PHBS-UK have within their agreement with the University (Business School), and how they work with the University to ensure that standards of the University awards are maintained. They explained their involvement in initiating programme approvals and the role of the University in finally approving them. Staff also confirmed that any new proposals first consider academic requirements, conduct market research and ensure that the proposed programmes promote national and international employability. Academic and professional support staff who met the team [M02] explained how they work with both the English sector-recognised and Peking University standards, for example when assessing and grading students. They understood the different progression thresholds to gain academic credits from the Peking University and how they align with English sector-recognised standards. [M04]

77 Peking University Business School representatives [M04] described the arrangements in place with PHBS-UK and confirmed that the syllabi delivered at PHBS-UK are directed by the University (Business School) and that the ultimate responsibility for standards for the current courses rests with the University. The representatives described the different ways in which the University ensures that standards are maintained through course evaluation scores and ensures that the final approval of new courses and programmes rests with the University (Business School). The representatives described how the two centres work together and confirmed that the University (Business School) is responsible for the academic standards for its programmes. The assessment team found that staff understood their responsibility for maintaining the academic standards of their

courses in line with the University requirements.

Conclusions

78 As described above, the assessment team considered all the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

79 PHBS's approach to the management of its agreement with the University informs the arrangements to ensure that courses delivered meet the relevant academic standards. This agreement confirms the establishment of a governance framework including the Academic Board for PHBS-UK to manage the standards and quality of its courses in line with sector-recognised standards and those of the University.

80 The Programme and Course Approval Policy and the PHBS Collaborative Policy both provide further direction for partnership work in terms of the new curriculum and the establishment of new partners. The proposals for collaboration with [REDACTED], [REDACTED] demonstrate effective consideration of responsibility for academic standards through the appointment of joint programme boards thus ensuring an effective framework for maintaining academic standards.

81 External examiners appointed for PHBS-UK courses confirm that student performance is in line with both English sector-recognised standards and the University academic standards.

82 Senior, academic and professional support staff from PHBS-UK were able to explain how they carried out their respective roles regarding the partnership with the University. They understood the academic standards they need to maintain when teaching and assessing for students to succeed in their courses. They understood how student achievement aligns to English sector-recognised standards and how this applies in the context of University partnerships. Staff from the University were able to explain how the arrangements with PHBS-UK as the delivery centre works and how the responsibility for standards is implemented. Therefore, the assessment team concludes that this Core practice is met.

83 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the assessment 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

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

85 The QAA assessment 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).

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

87 There were no third-party endorsements available in respect of this standard, and the team did not need to meet with any external experts in this regard.

What the evidence shows

88 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

89 The initial approval of the courses offered by PHBS-UK takes place at the University and PHBS-UK's main responsibility is to ensure the maintenance of the academic standards for these courses. For this it appoints an external examiner for the external scrutiny of its courses in line with English sector-recognised standards. PHBS-UK's academic regulations [006] require the external examiner to comment and make recommendations, when relevant, on the appropriateness of the assessment processes and the standards achieved by its students in the courses they undertake. The comprehensive Examination Board and External Examiners' Terms of Reference [009] include the process for appointing external examiners for periods of up to five years. External examiners are identified and nominated by the Head of PHBS-UK, and these nominations are subject to the approval of the Academic Board. It is the responsibility of the Head of PHBS-UK to ensure that each appointed external examiner receives copies of the academic regulations, moderation policy and assessment policy, and to arrange a formal induction for them with the Academic Management Team before they take up their role, to understand their duties and responsibilities once they are appointed. The wide-ranging list of these duties includes among other things to judge impartially, to compare student performances with those achieved in other higher education providers, to comment on the appropriateness of assessment and to report on whether assessment meets the requirements of English sector-recognised standards and above, where appropriate. The responsibilities mainly relate to reporting on whether the academic standards of PHBS-UK courses and programmes are achieved as planned, grades allocated align with marking schemes, assessment tasks are clear, and the courses and programmes are of high quality.

90 Additionally, the Programme and Course Approval Policy [011] and the Moderation Policy and Procedures [010] are key policies which confirm the role of externals when developing new courses and/or programmes. The assessment team saw requirements within the Programme and Course Approval Policy [011] to ensure scrutiny of new curricula by external academic expertise, and the Moderation Policy and Procedures [010] highlight the role of external examiners to report on responses to previous reports and any further development points; good practice; the appropriateness of assessment tasks; the effectiveness of internal moderation; and judgement of student achievements in comparison with those achieved at other English higher education providers. In this context too, PHBS-UK has plans to appoint by the summer of 2022 an independent external quality assurance

adviser to provide further external expertise in terms of quality and standards of curriculum delivery. A candidate has been identified and is currently going through the approval and appointment process. [122]

91 This approach to externality is consistent with the overarching assessment policy [008] which requires the external examiner to externally moderate, and in this respect the minutes of the examination board for the academic year 2019-20 [054] provide clear evidence of external examiner comments on the clarity and consistency of marking and mark distributions for the different courses, and comments on associated practices, such as internal marking, moderation, feedback and the quality of the assessment tasks.

92 The courses offered by PHBS-UK lead to University awards which include the Master of Arts (MA) in Finance, Master of Arts (MA) in Management and the Master's in Business Administration (MBA). The master's degrees for Finance and Management require students to pass courses equivalent to 54 credits (MBA requires 50 credits), obtain a GPA of 2.7 and pass the dissertation by defending their thesis. This is based on modules of three credits each, rather than the UK 10 credit module model, and the assessment team formed the view that the two were directly comparable, which is confirmed by the acceptance of these courses as meeting the standards of the planned partner universities. [057] A master's postgraduate student who has completed the course required, but not met the requirements for graduation, will receive a Certificate of Course Completion. [110]

93 Grades offered by PHBS-UK individually generate a final grade consolidated from the different assessment components that make up that course, adjusted for any mitigating circumstances. A failed grade is therefore when the result for the course is less than 40% (under the English mark scheme) and 50% (under the Chinese mark scheme). Grading criteria are determined by the content, aims and objectives of the course and used to determine grades between D as the pass, and F as a fail with a retake opportunity. The differences in grading are linked to the quality of the work ranging from outstanding quality at the upper end to minimal quality or non-submission at the lower end. [006, p 11] Samples of assessed student work [S01] and the moderation forms scrutinised by the assessment team show that marking is consistent with Level 7 FHEQ requirements and that there are effective internal moderation practices and evidence of actions taken in response to moderation requirements. The assessment team found that internal verifiers and external examiners could differentiate between the different levels of student achievements, in line with academic regulations and marking criteria. The assessment team determined from its scrutiny of student work that assessment and classifications are applied in line with academic regulations and course requirements. On the basis of the above, the team confirms that PHBS-UK's academic regulations and governance framework on the role of external examiners, and those on assessment classification processes, are credible, robust and evidence-informed for maintaining standards in line with FHEQ Level 7 and standards set by the University.

94 Currently, PHBS-UK has one external examiner but it plans to appoint more from September 2022, such as a second external examiner in management to provide expertise in ensuring that the standards and quality of management courses are comparable with UK universities, and a third external examiner in Chinese studies [Plan for review and enhancement of quality standards [122]]. Additionally, it is planned to appoint an experienced academic from an established English higher education provider to serve as a quality assurance adviser and provide greater independent external scrutiny on the quality and standards of existing and potential courses and programmes. It is also planned that this adviser will be a member of the Academic Board commencing September 2022. [Plan for review of quality standards [122]]

95 Further, the planned developments within the Memoranda of Agreement for the

programmes and the proposals for both the [redacted] and [redacted] explicitly provide for the appointment of external examiners to these programmes and to recruit other external members as part of governance bodies. For example, the proposed International Legal Practice LLM and Business Communication Study Programme requires the appointment of external examiners at stage one for the Legal Foundation and English Proficiency Study and at stage two relating to the LLM in Law Certificate of Solicitor Qualification to Practise and the Certificate of English Proficiency for the Legal Profession. The Programme Curriculum and Study Plan for this proposal sets out operational plans and allocated responsibilities for the partners including the appointment of external examiners at each stage of the programme. Although details on assessment classifications are still being considered for this development, the plan confirms that the two examination boards will decide on recommendations for progression, grades and awards at both stages, and details key formative and summative assessment points including mock and external examinations for professional courses. The assessment team's scrutiny of PHBS-UK's approach to establishing externality and transparent assessment classification processes for current programmes and the plans identified within its potential developments with the three universities confirm PHBS-UK's approaches to using external expertise and assessment and classification processes are, and will be, credible, robust and evidence based.

96 The assessment team examined the programme handbooks for the current provision [055] and noted that they include detailed information on student assessments and the examination regulations, including those conducted online. It also includes clear information on grading classifications and grading schemes for assessment. This information is also included in the course lecturer handbook, [055] the assessment and programme handbook; [057] and the student handbook. [065b] The team determined on the basis of the above evidence that approved course documentation reliably, fairly and transparently includes information on assessment and classification processes.

97 In minutes of the examination board for the 2019-2020 academic year [054] it was confirmed that external examiner comments were considered and acted on appropriately by PHBS-UK. The external examiner confirmed within examination board meetings [009] that the assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent. For example the examination board minutes for 2019-20 (Block 4) [054] note external examiner comments in relation to the Fixed Income Securities, Microeconomics and Managerial Economics courses that marks were consistent with grading criteria. Further in the external examiner report for 2019-2020 [054] there is confirmation that standards align with those achieved within other English universities for Level 7 and that tutors have applied the standard conversion table as requested by the external examiner. [122]

98 Senior, [M01] academic and professional support [M02] staff are fully aware of the role of an external examiner and know the importance of such independent external scrutiny. All staff were very clear about what is expected from them in terms of internal and external moderation of academic standards at threshold level and above in line with FHEQ Level 7. [M01; M02] For example, academic staff explained how they ensure that the high standards of the student dissertations are maintained by ensuring that they are publishable and how the system of moderation supports this. [M02] They articulated the purpose of internal moderations and the role of the internal moderator in assessing standards and the need for further external examiner confirmation of grades and student achievements within examination boards. In relation to the assessment and classification process, academic staff discussed their understanding of mapping all University regulations, including those on assessment, against English sector-recognised standards acknowledging, however, that there are contextual cultural differences in how these regulations operate. [M02] Academic staff also referred to the different assessment methods they apply within the different courses. [M02] For example, they explained how the assessment for the Chinese language

course allocates 10% of the marks for in-class contribution and the remainder for different forms of assessment. Senior staff explained how the grading scheme works and how it accommodates the requirements of the FHEQ at Level 7. The external examiner who attended the senior team meeting also confirmed that staff applied these regulations when assessing students. [M01] The assessment team determined that staff fully understand the requirements of the use of external expertise and apply PHBS-UK's academic regulations approved by the University to the courses it delivers.

99 Students also confirmed they are aware of the academic regulations and policies and were able to discuss how they engaged with the assessment processes. [M03] They knew that information on academic regulations and policies was included in their student handbooks and accessible on the VLE. They also knew the number of credits they had to study for their master's programmes including the available electives. They explained how courses such as Academic Writing used assessment processes which involve smaller tasks which need to be completed initially, and for which immediate feedback to support students to apply in further assignments across all courses is provided. Based on these discussions the assessment team confirmed that students regard assessment and classification processes as reliable, fair and transparent.

Conclusions

100 As described above, the assessment team considered all the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

101 PHBS-UK has policies to support the assessment and classification processes for existing and potential courses and programmes, and to support the engagement of externality. The Programme and Course Approval Policy which supports the process for developing new courses and new partnerships requires information on, among other things, the teaching, learning and assessment and requires the engagement of external academics. This policy sets clear guidelines for approving new courses or programmes and procedures for approving new programmes and new partners taking into account the academic standards of the awarding bodies and the requirements of the FHEQ at Level 7.

102 PHBS-UK plans to appoint more external examiners to support further developments with UK universities in addition to the current external examiner for the courses it delivers. It is also at the latter stage of appointing a quality adviser to become a member of its Academic Board to provide guidance on quality assurance matters as an independent adviser. The planned developments with the [REDACTED] all specify the requirement to appoint external examiners to the programmes being developed.

103 PHBS-UK currently has one external examiner who has been appointed to offer independent external oversight of the quality and standards of the courses it offers. External examiner reports provide evidence of consistent external moderation of student work and grades achieved, and this enabled the assessment team to conclude that PHBS-UK's assessment and classification processes are reliable, fair and transparent and that it responds in a timely and appropriate manner to any recommendations made by the external examiner.

104 Staff understand the importance of the role of the external examiner in providing

external scrutiny of the quality and standards of the courses delivered. Senior staff talked about the plans for appointing more externals especially in light of further developments, including professional accreditation. Staff demonstrated understanding of the mapping of Level 7 FHEQ requirements with the University's academic regulations and the different assessment and classification levels for their courses. Academic staff explained how they applied this mapping when assessing and marking student assessments and discussed their engagement with external examiners for moderation activities. Staff also explained how they applied assessment and classification requirements appropriately in line with academic regulations and course requirements.

105 Students confirmed that they are fully aware of the assessment and classification processes for their courses and know they can easily access information on them within their student handbooks and the VLE. They described the assessment processes as fair, and the guidance given enables them to understand what is expected of them.

106 The team's scrutiny of student assessed work confirmed that moderation processes are effective in ensuring that marking is consistent in applying appropriate assessment classifications. Student work also shows that students are performing in line with the expected outcomes at Level 7 and confirm that assessment and classification processes are carried out in line with the academic regulations and the requirements of the individual courses. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

107 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all relevant evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix and leads the team to have a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

109 The QAA assessment 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).

How any samples of evidence were constructed

110 Sampling of admissions records was based on a small sample of four admissions records, both successful and unsuccessful. Admissions records are maintained in China, and because of the pandemic restrictions there that prevent staff from entering the University (Business School) campus, a larger sample could not be obtained.

What the evidence shows

111 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

112 The agreement between PHBS-UK and Peking Business School clearly sets out the responsibilities of both parties and requires PHBS-UK to establish a governance structure to manage compliance in accordance with both English higher education requirements and the rules of Peking University (Business School). This agreement clarifies and stipulates that the governing law is that of England and Wales. [118] The agreement is supported by the PHBS-UK Admissions Policy and Procedure [007] which provides details on how applications to study are managed and entry requirements. Applications are managed by PHBS-UK, with responsibility for final admissions decisions residing with the Business School following recommendations from PHBS-UK. [M01]

113 The Admissions Policy and Procedure [007] facilitates an inclusive admissions system by committing PHBS-UK to equal opportunities by selecting individual students on the basis of applicants' relevant merits and abilities. It also states that applications from students with disabilities are assessed in exactly the same way as for all other students, following the established admissions procedures, and that consideration of support requirements is subsequently addressed. If an offer is made, an assessment of needs is carried out to ensure that PHBS-UK can provide the required support. [007] This is underpinned by an Equality and Diversity Policy Statement [002] which states that its principles apply to all policies and procedures at PHBS-UK.

114 PHBS-UK also has a policy on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), which involves consideration of applications on a case-by-case basis in consultation with admissions professionals who are aware of the required equivalences and credits. [Further information on the Admissions criteria 118] PHBS-UK confirmed that where a student has a degree from an institution that does not feature on the Chinese Ministry of Education list, it would provide advice to China on whether the student's qualification should be accepted. [Academic and Professional Support Staff Meeting M02]

115 The assessment team confirmed that both PHBS-UK and the Business School are involved in the admission process for students, and that the Business School has the final decision on whether or not an offer is made. [Presentation Slides [125]; Meeting [M01]] Business School representatives [M04] confirmed that, as part of the decision-making process, all applications are discussed by both the Business School and PHBS-UK, [Meeting

with Senior Staff M01] and that the admissions process is entirely based on academic merit. The assessment team considered that because relevant academic regulations are in place, PHBS-UK has a clear institutional policy relating to the recruitment, selection and admission of students.

116 The Admissions Policy and Procedure [007] also provides details on how applicants can submit a complaint concerning the application process or an appeal against an admissions decision. This provides the opportunity to appeal to either the International Office of the Business School or to the Senior Tutor at PHBS-UK. PHBS-UK confirmed that it had not received any complaints or appeals against admissions decisions to date.

117 PHBS-UK plans for admission of students for future intakes are in the draft agreements with the three universities concerned. In the agreement with the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] there is a clear admissions process which, as with current practice, provides for an initial assessment by PHBS-UK against the agreed criteria, followed by review and approval at the University, with a Chinese language skills assessment where the University deems it necessary. Similarly, the agreement with [REDACTED] specifies that an equivalent process will be put in place against detailed criteria including an honours degree at 2:1 or above, and an approved English language certification, and again that the University has oversight and the final confirmation of admission. The third agreement [REDACTED] confirms that the University handles all admissions in accordance with its established practices, and that following these admissions students register with both parties. Given the oversight and engagement of University partners, the assessment team concludes that PHBS-UK has robust, strong and evidence-based plans for ensuring that admissions systems are reliable, fair and inclusive.

118 PHBS-UK's general entry requirements, detailed in the Admissions Policy and Procedure, [007] indicate that applicants need at least an upper-second class honours degree in their undergraduate studies at UK universities, or an equivalent qualification. Applicants with relevant equivalent professional or working experience will also be considered for taught postgraduate degree programmes, such as the MBA programme. The assessment team confirmed this by reference to the PHBS-UK website, which is the primary source for recruitment and admissions information, and which the assessment team found clear and accurate. For example, the standard pro forma used provides a separate section for admissions requirements, and these [135] in relation to the MA in Finance, for example, require applicants to satisfy the postgraduate admission criteria of Peking University; hold IELTS 6.5 or equivalent for international students from outside China and non-English speaking countries or regions; possess a first University degree at a grade of upper merit (2.1 from UK universities) or an overall GPA at or above 3.5 or equivalent; and satisfy admission interview requirements if necessary. The assessment team confirmed [133 – Peking University website for admissions] that the first of these criteria is readily available to students and in relation to the use of admissions interviews. Staff confirmed that the Admissions Policy and Procedure [007] specifies clearly that applicants are not interviewed where the written evidence, certificates and references are sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant meets the laid-down criteria. The only exceptions to this are applications for the MBA programme or those linked to a scholarship. [007] These arrangements were considered by the assessment team to be reliable, fair and inclusive, because academic merit and a student's ability to succeed on the programme forms the basis for admissions decisions. In this regard, the assessment team was able to confirm that the generic information for applicants is transparent, inclusive and fit-for-purpose.

119 PHBS-UK confirmed that this is the first year that it has engaged the services of a recruitment agent and currently there are no students who have been recruited via this route. PHBS-UK has in place an agreement with the agent [Agents Agreement 062] for one year initially and has ensured that the agent was provided with information on policies and

requirements. [095] PHBS-UK confirmed [M05] that it has delivered a training session with the agent, approved all materials published by the agent, and will keep the agent's work under review to ensure full adherence to all policies and requirements. [M05] The assessment team concluded that PHBS-UK has sufficient infrastructure in place to give confidence that arrangements with agents are understood and the admissions policy and process is implemented effectively.

120 Admissions requirements and information for students is set out in the programme handbook [057] and on the PHBS-UK website. [133] The programme handbook is a generic document which currently covers all courses on offer. For example, for the MBA, the relevant section of the programme handbook stipulates that an applicant must satisfy the postgraduate admission criteria of Peking University (Business School); have an IELTS score of 6.5 or more; a first degree at 2:1 or higher; at least one year's work experience; and a satisfactory admission interview. [061] As this document is available on the PHBS-UK website, [133] it is available to prospective students as well as to those already admitted.

121 The assessment team sought a sample of admissions records for intakes over the last three academic years [T02] but, owing to pandemic restrictions in China (where the records are stored), only a small (four applications) sample from 2021-22 was available. The team tested this as far as possible and noted from the evidence available that there was some application of the policies and procedures in respect of admissions. [007] In this context, there was limited evidence of checking of prior qualifications for domestic (UK) students, and of verifying that international students had the appropriate level of English Language skills (IELTS score). Where student applications were rejected, the reasons for rejections were made clear in the records and surrounded the failure to evidence one or more of the qualification requirements. [T02] While the sample tested was small, the assessment team detected no instances which were outside the procedures and noted no deviations.

122 Academic and professional support staff [M02] stated that their understanding of fair and inclusive admissions focuses on determining applicants' suitability based on academic merit. They provided the assessment team with copies of a detailed flowchart [125] which sets out for all staff the stages of the process from interest and enquiry through to admission and induction. They confirmed that admissions interviews are undertaken using the admissions interview questionnaire, [063] and that if any member of staff involved in admissions advice and guidance has any questions or queries, they can seek advice and guidance from any senior staff, or request that an academic management team meeting be convened to discuss their query. [063] While there is no formal induction training for staff involved in the admissions process, staff confirmed that they learn through a supported process involving senior staff. [M02] In reality, and given the numbers of admissions involved, all internal admissions decisions at present are made by the Academic Management Team (AMT) and all members of AMT are required to familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures of PHBS-UK. [063] Given this approach, the assessment team concluded that all staff involved in recruitment understand their responsibilities and are appropriately skilled and supported.

123 Students confirmed [M03] that they submitted their application to the Business School and found the process to be very clear and smooth. They confirmed that they needed to provide lots of documentation in support of their application and went through a number of steps, for example validation of prior qualifications, before they received an offer of a place to study.

Conclusions

124 As described above, the assessment team considered all the evidence submitted

[Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether PHBS-UK 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

125 PHBS-UK manages any arrangements with recruitment agents effectively to ensure strict adherence to its policies and requirements. PHBS-UK has ensured that the agent is briefed on PHBS-UK requirements, provided with the information they need and there are plans to review compliance of the agent.

126 The institutional policy and academic regulations relating to admissions is clear, and the contract between PHBS-UK and the University (Business School) explicitly gives precedence to the English system. Arrangements in place include policies to cover all aspects of the admissions process, including the facility for complaints to be made and considered fairly and on a timely basis.

127 The assessment team found that staff involved in admissions understand their role and are appropriately skilled and trained through a supported process and that, at present, senior staff lead on recruitment and admissions processes. Students tend to agree that the admissions system is reliable, fair and inclusive, because those met by the team reported that the process was fair and very clear and engagement was smooth.

128 PHBS-UK plans for admissions systems are set out in agreements with other partner universities and are clear in providing the role for which each University has to play in the admissions process. In this way, the assessment team was assured that the plans are robust and credible and there are established policies for the recruitment and admission of students. These were considered by the assessment team to be reliable, fair and inclusive, because academic merit and students' ability to succeed on the programme form the basis for admissions decisions.

129 Admissions records demonstrate that PHBS-UK's policies are implemented in practice, and the sample tested by the assessment team contained no evidence of minor omissions or oversights. This is because from the admissions records assessed, decisions were made in line with the PHBS-UK admissions criteria. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

130 The admissions records provided were limited and not wholly complete, due to access restrictions to records, as a result of the pandemic. While the records seen by the assessment team did not indicate that there were any variances from the laid-down processes and procedures, the team was not able to complete the range and depth of testing to fully conclude on the effectiveness of the admissions policy and process. Therefore, on this basis, the assessment team has a moderate degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

132 The QAA assessment 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).

How any samples of evidence were constructed

133 The assessment team observed a sample of three different teaching sessions covering Research Methods, Artificial Intelligence Analytics and Corporate Finance courses, which represent a range of modules in different subject areas.

What the evidence shows

134 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

135 The provision of high-quality courses is overseen by the Academic Board [004] and incorporated in its terms of reference. The work of the Academic Board in this respect is underpinned by a suite of policies, including academic regulations, [006] assessment policy [008] and moderation policy. [010] PHBS-UK is not currently responsible for the design of the curriculum [M01] but works with the University (Business School) on the design, approval and delivery of programmes and courses [Programme and course approval process [108]; meeting with senior staff [M01]].

136 New course and programme proposals are developed and endorsed at PHBS-UK and then approved by the University (Business School). [011] Approval of new courses requires consideration of the business case and academic needs, course title, aims and objectives, credit, learning outcomes, content, syllabus, teaching plans and reading materials. [011] Approval of new programmes requires consideration for the name of the proposed programme, the 'highlights', the curriculum of the programme including objectives, learning outcomes, credits, teaching strategy, assessment, courses, and dissertation if it is required. In addition to details of the curriculum, the new programme proposal also needs to include information on quality control and management, student experience management, marketing and student recruitment, programme governance structure, fees, projected finance and the type of resources required. [011]

137 Although the University (Business School) is responsible for curriculum design, the assessment team noted that the PHBS-UK Academic Management Team (AMT) provides oversight of delivery and the quality of teaching. [Minutes of Academic Management Team, 056] AMT's role includes responsibility for 'the management of academic standards and quality' [056, p.1] and minutes confirm that discussions take place to ensure a high-quality learning experience. For example, consideration of online, blended, on-campus delivery is discussed in these meetings, together with aspects of the learning, teaching and assessment approaches required in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. [056] The assessment team concluded that this demonstrates that the approach to overseeing quality is via an official forum at PHBS-UK, and that this forum performs its function.

138 Examination boards primarily monitor standards, but they also record the quality of delivery. Examination board meeting minutes [054] confirm that discussions take place around the quality of student outputs. The minutes include details of discussions around curriculum content (for example, a small overlap in content between two modules - Investment and Corporate Finance - was identified along with action the following year to

address it, 2019-20, Block 3 [054]) and student experience (the external examiner commented on the importance of providing good quality student feedback, 2020-21, Block 3 [054]). External examiner reports also confirm that teaching delivery is of an appropriate quality. [054a] The assessment team found that PHBS-UK has an established approach to overseeing the delivery and monitoring for quality of teaching and that this is applied consistently.

139 PHBS-UK's plans for the approval of new courses and programmes is credible because PHBS-UK has already followed this process in the design of a new programme [011] so the assessment team was able to see the evidence of how this process will work. The new programme was for a dual award with [REDACTED]. The draft programme has not yet been approved, but the outcome of the process gives the assessment team confidence that PHBS-UK has credible and robust plans for course design moving forward. This is because the new programme included clear learning outcomes, a sound business case and rationale for the proposal, details of how the partners would work together in terms of programme management and quality control, a curriculum which was clear and appropriate, and credit values consistent with national standards for an award at Level 7. Programme approval followed the processes outlined in the course approval document, with evidence of internal scrutiny [033d] and approval at the Academic Board in the PHBS-UK stage [033f] taking place before the University (Business School). [033g]

140 PHBS-UK has engaged an external expert for its MA Finance programme [038] to assess to what extent the programme meets the standards and expectations of the FHEQ Level 7. The fact that this was commissioned demonstrates to the team that PHBS-UK is preparing comprehensive plans for the development of its programmes which will ensure that they are high quality.

141 Programme [057] and course specifications [041] contain all relevant and expected information such as learning outcomes, course description, syllabus, information on assessment, marking criteria, class contact hours, and approach to delivery. PHBS-UK also has a standardised course (module) specification template in which information on learning, teaching and assessment is provided, including delivery, number of contact hours, a course description, learning outcomes, syllabus, assessment and key reading. [041] The assessment team noted how students will be able to achieve the programme learning outcomes as outlined in the programme handbook [057] because in the courses sampled [041] the mapping of learning outcomes to curriculum was explicit and transparent.

142 Academic and professional support staff [M02]) confirmed that the VLE includes full assessment details to students, which are also explained in lecture slides (usually the first lecture). [Sample of Assessed Work, S01] With access to the VLE, the assessment team was able to confirm the accuracy and thoroughness of the approved course documentation held online. Staff also explained that the term 'examination' is a University (Business School) generic term for 'assessment' and that they explain the details to students in class. [M02]

143 The evidence shows that the external examiner is satisfied that the quality of the courses delivered at PHBS-UK is high because they confirm in the annual reports [054a] that they are satisfied with the quality of teaching and there are comments in the minutes of the Boards of Examiners that relate directly to the quality of teaching. [027] According to the External Examiners and Examination Board Policy, [009] it is the role of the external examiner not only to monitor standards but also to ensure that assessments are well designed in terms of their clarity, proficiency, standard and structure for assessing students' learning outcomes of courses and programmes. The external examiner confirms that programmes are well designed and provide a high-quality academic experience for students. The external examiner expresses satisfaction with the quality of the courses and makes comments or recommendations that relate to the quality of courses and student experience,

such as a recommendation to provide more detailed feedback in one instance. [054] The assessment team noted that the role of the external examiner at PHBS-UK has been deliberately introduced to be consistent with the English system and it is not a usual part of academic culture in Chinese institutions.

144 The assessment team considered student views on the quality of courses provided via student feedback mechanisms, in the student submission [114] and in the student meeting. [M03] The student submission [114] provides positive testimony from students regarding the quality of courses delivered at PHBS-UK, reflecting their satisfaction with the development of a programme which encourages students to expand their learning outside the classroom, and their view that the professors provide excellent delivery, illustrated with real-life examples. Students also comment in a positive way on the integration of teaching and assessment and summarise their experience at PHBS-UK as being of the highest quality, both in terms of the academic qualities and standards, and the learning experience. [114]

145 Students complete a survey at the end of each course to assess their views on the quality of the course. PHBS-UK staff then analyse the results and respond where appropriate. [029] The survey includes questions around the quality of teaching content, teaching materials, teaching methodology, 'attitudes' of the lecturer and effectiveness of the approach to teaching. [039c] These surveys are analysed by the course lecturer and by the Senior Tutor. The Senior Tutor liaises with the course lecturer over any actions and the evidence provides examples of this, including providing more opportunities for students to apply learning in Chinese language classes, and to design the delivery of mathematical concepts in a way to apply them more closely to business scenarios. [029] This shows there is an ongoing review of the quality of teaching. PHBS-UK has plans to develop this process further to strengthen how they 'close the loop' on actions and support staff where actions are required. [Plans for review and enhancement of quality standards 122] For example, there are plans in place to set up an annual programme review process to cover student progression, student satisfaction, and teaching and learning. The evidence shows that staff feel confident that they receive feedback on their delivery via course evaluations and via Staff/Student Liaison Meetings. [078]

146 The sample of Lecturer and Course Delivery Response to Student Feedback [029] and course evaluations [075] provide further evidence of how students view the quality of their courses. These documents consist of the minutes of a Staff/Student Liaison Meeting [029] and the results of formal module evaluation surveys over the last three years related to the quality of teaching and learning. [075] Students perceive the quality of courses at PHBS-UK to be high, as reflected in the consistently high scores in course evaluations for questions relating to the quality of teaching. Students grade A, B, C or D and these scores are converted into a number. The evidence shows that the course evaluation scores for most courses are overwhelmingly As and Bs in all categories relating to quality, teaching content, teaching materials, teaching methodology, teaching attitudes and teaching effectiveness.

147 Issues identified in Staff/Student Liaison Meetings and Course Evaluations [075] are raised with course lecturers. [029] The assessment team saw evidence of action taken as a result. For example, the desire for more conversation in Chinese classes was raised and addressed in the next block. [029] With such a small organisation with low student numbers, informal mechanisms are appropriate to gather student feedback, and the assessment team found evidence of how this operates in practice. The student submission [114] confirms that staff act on student feedback in a constructive way. The assessment team concluded from student feedback and also meeting with students that the students tend to view their courses as being of high quality.

148 The assessment team also met with students to assess their views about the quality

of courses sampled. [M03] Students confirmed that they were satisfied with the high quality of their learning experience. [M03] They were particularly positive about the way in which a computer programming package was taught, that courses were 'engaging' and that they were lucky their staff were so 'available' for them. They also said the experience was 'intense' and that they had to work hard.

149 PHBS-UK is included within the scope of the international accreditations of the University (Business School), including those by the Associate to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) as well as by the Association of MBAs (AMBA). [017] While the international accreditations do not usually observe classes, they do access all areas of the VLE and request samples of teaching materials relating to whole modules in order to assess that the quality of teaching is consistent with other universities of high quality. As such, the assessment team was satisfied that the evidence shows other organisations confirm that academic standards are consistent with high quality universities globally.

150 Staff are able to identify what is meant by high quality teaching, and their understanding ties closely with student feedback on the subject. Staff confirm that they know when they teach well because of the feedback via course evaluations and informal feedback. [M02] Staff also provided an example of how they have acted on feedback in order to ensure that their teaching is high quality. The course lecturer for a module that received some recommendations for improvements 2019-20 (Fixed Income Securities) explained how they took on board the student feedback and sought to re-design the materials and delivery of the course to make the workload for students more manageable and slowed the pace of delivery to ensure that all students were able to follow, while still achieving the learning outcomes of the module. The course lecturer voluntarily used this module as evidence of how he had used student feedback to improve teaching quality [M02] and he was pleased with improved feedback in future courses.

151 The sample of Course Evaluation Report and Course Improvement [023] document provides evidence of staff reflection on their pedagogy and on how to ensure a high-quality experience for students in the light of student feedback where students perceived a gap in quality. This shows that PHBS-UK staff are able to identify high-quality teaching and use the results of course evaluations to ensure that their teaching is high quality. This evidence demonstrates that PHBS-UK takes the course evaluation seriously and uses it to ensure the quality of their teaching, and results of course evaluations show that students tend to view the quality of their teaching positively. The assessment team formed the view that staff use a range of mechanisms to ensure the quality of their teaching is high. As well as appointing appropriately experienced and skilled staff, staff use course evaluation, course results and external examiner comments to confirm quality.

152 The observations of teaching [OB01] provide evidence that staff plan and organise their sessions well because in each session the opening slides provided a form of 'agenda' for the day and clearly articulated learning outcomes/objectives for each session that fit well with the learning outcomes of the course overall. In two of the three sessions the content seemed rather ambitious but carefully planned in terms of progression of skills and knowledge build-up. In all cases, content was appropriate, up-to-date and aligned with the objectives.

153 In all three teaching observations, class sizes were small (no more than 12) and staff were delivering a 'hyflex' model, teaching to both online and in-class students at the same time. They managed to treat both sets of students inclusively and engaged students successfully with activities appropriate for each session. The Research Methods session began with an 'appetizer' activity to recap the content of the previous week in order to build on it. This provided a good way to scaffold learning. There were some good applications of the content to industrial practice (for example in the Artificial Intelligence Analytics session).

154 In all three observed lessons delivery of material was good, explanations sharp and usually at an appropriate pace, rather fast-paced at times, although students seemed able to follow and asked questions when they needed to. Students seemed to be engaged and felt confident asking questions; the level of questions was appropriate, showed a level of understanding and genuine interest in the subject matter and responses were accessible and helpful.

155 The assessment team was given access to the virtual learning environment (VLE) in order to assess the context of the teaching sessions, and the evidence confirmed that these teaching observation sessions were appropriate and followed on well from the content of previous weeks. The VLE serves as a store for lecture slides and in the case of a few modules includes additional assessment information.

156 The assessment team found that the observation of teaching sessions [OB01] shows that the quality of teaching is high because lessons are well planned and organised, demonstrate the learning outcomes, course lecturers use resources effectively, manage the classroom well, are knowledgeable and approachable and students are engaged in their learning.

Conclusions

157 As described above, the assessment team considered all the evidence submitted to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

158 PHBS-UK has robust and credible plans for designing and delivering high-quality courses, and its policies for course design and delivery facilitate the provision of high-quality courses. This is demonstrated in the planned arrangements for joint working with, for example, [REDACTED]. Its approved documentation indicates that teaching, learning and assessment design enables students to meet and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes. The external examiner also confirms that the courses concerned are high quality.

159 Based on the evidence presented, the assessment team determined that PHBS-UK's set of regulations and policies for course design and delivery facilitate the delivery of high-quality courses. In particular, students tend to regard their courses as being of high quality, especially around the integration of teaching and assessment, but more broadly in their appraisal of teaching. Staff understand what 'high quality' means in the context of PHBS-UK and are confident of how the provision meets that definition.

160 Observations of teaching and learning demonstrate clarity of objectives, good planning and organisation, a sound method or approach, good delivery, appropriate content, effective use of resources and student engagement. Therefore, the assessment team concludes, based on the evidence described above, that this Core practice is met.

161 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the assessment 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

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

163 The QAA assessment 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).

How any samples of evidence were constructed

164 The assessment team observed a sample of three different teaching sessions covering Research Methods, Artificial Intelligence Analytics and Corporate Finance courses, which represent a range of modules in different subject areas.

What the evidence shows

165 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

166 PHBS-UK has a comprehensive Staff Recruitment Policy [016] in which it outlines an institutional approach to the appointment of all staff. The main recruitment principle is stated as being that PHBS-UK will seek to appoint the most suitable candidate. The Staff Recruitment Policy [016] indicates that a business case for a new member of staff is made by the Head of PHBS-UK and is approved by the University (Business School). Each post is advertised for at least two weeks in the UK, applicants are short-listed by the University (Business School) in consultation with the Head of PHBS-UK. Potential recruits for academic posts are asked to present on their research/teaching as part of the recruitment process to an interview panel. The Head of PHBS-UK participates in interview panels, and final decisions on appointments are made by the University (Business School) which is ultimately responsible for academic appointments [016, p.3] and by PHBS-UK for all other appointments. [M01] [M04] For non-academic posts, PHBS-UK is responsible for all aspects of recruitment. [016] Shortlisting and interviews are carried out by the Head of PHBS-UK, Head of HR and a representative of the area in which the vacancy sits. [016, p.3-4] Staff involved in recruitment confirmed that they followed this process [M02] and that qualifications are checked before staff take up their role. [M02] Principles of equality, diversity and inclusivity are outlined in the policy [016, p.1] and in the Equality and Diversity Statement [067] as well as in the Equal Opportunities Policy, [089c] and this latter policy states that all candidates are asked the same, competency-based questions.

167 The Recruitment Policy [016] does not apply to hourly-paid academic staff. [016, p.1] The Programme and Course Approval Policy [011] states that all appointments of hourly-paid external lecturers are approved by the Head of PHBS-UK and then by the Director of MA programmes. [p.2] The meetings with staff, [M01] including senior staff, [M02] confirmed that they followed the process. The hourly paid members of staff met by the assessment team confirmed that they have been approached by the Head of PHBS-UK, asked to apply and submitted their CV before being offered the post. They confirmed that accompanying documents were submitted such as proof of qualifications. [M02]

168 PHBS-UK provides an onboarding programme, [123] induction information, [087] and course lecturer information [087e] for all new staff along with an Employee Handbook. [069] Most of this information is administrative, such as accessing IT, record-keeping and employee policies, or mandatory training (for example, Data Protection, Health and Safety, Bullying and Harassment training) but the induction [Induction Plan 042] includes a session

with the HR Manager to ensure new staff are aware of protocols to be maintained and the requirements of the role. [staff performance and training 123] This is a new approach and will be fully implemented in relation to future appointments. New members of academic staff are also given the Course Lecturer Handbook [055] which contains information relating to the academic programme and regulations, and details of the course they will teach. They are also referred to the academic regulations [006] in full. Staff confirmed that they receive this documentation relating to the academic programmes at the start of each semester on an ongoing basis. [M02]

169 Full-time members of staff at PHBS-UK undertake an annual review. [123] An annual review for all academic staff, both full-time and hourly-paid is being introduced from 2022. [122] This will include an interview by the Head of PHBS-UK for academic staff who underperform in any aspect of teaching with potential rewards such as performance-related pay for those who perform well. [123, p.1] The assessment team found that the documentation in place is appropriate because annual review forms have been prepared that ask staff to identify achievements as well as areas for development and training needs. Plans are robust because the documentation is consistent with the plans outlined to support staff with regard to the improvement of standards and quality of teaching. The process is consistent with others in the higher education sector in England. The process of annual review is already in place for all non-academic staff. The assessment team found that the regulations for the recruitment, appointment and support of its staff will further support staff in the delivery of a high-quality academic experience.

170 The evidence shows that there is an institutional approach to assuring that course delivery is of high quality because it was explained by the Head of PHBS-UK that it recruits only those they know will deliver high-quality courses, and the team found that this is evident in CVs and experience of teaching elsewhere. The Head of PHBS-UK also explained that the course evaluations and external examiner reports provide an insight into the quality of teaching once staff are teaching for PHBS-UK, [M01] and the team was able to confirm this by reference to the supporting documentation. [Course evaluations [023] and External Examiner Reports [009]]

171 Future plans for recruitment and continued staff sufficiency outlined in the Development Plan [032] and Financial Forecast Table [032a] are credible, even if the target growth in student numbers up to 439 over the next five years [032, 0.12] is achieved, because there is considerable capacity within the existing team for growth in student numbers as PHBS-UK outlined in the Business Plan [032] and from the University (Business School). [M05] The Head of PHBS-UK confirmed that funds are available for additional support staff as the organisation grows but currently there is no need for additional support staff. [M05] This was confirmed by the students who are happy with current provision. [M03]

172 The assessment team was provided with a detailed process description by the HR Manager, using an example of an anonymised academic post at assistant, associate or full professor level. The first stage of this is described by PHBS-UK as the creation of a job recruitment account on a commercial software platform. While not described as such, the 'position details' section provides all of the details which would be found in a job description, including the job responsibilities and the qualification requirements. [Anonymised recruitment process 113]

173 The provider submission [p.4] highlights that the academic and support staff at PHBS-UK hold appropriate qualifications and have relevant experience and skills. The team requested further evidence which was provided via a range of sample CVs [066] and substantiated by reference to the website. [134] The sample of staff CVs [066] demonstrates that (full-time) academic staff are appropriately qualified and skilled to be able to deliver the courses at FHEQ Level 7 effectively because they are academically qualified (hold relevant

PhDs), have research expertise and experience in their field. They publish in relevant subject areas (for example, in finance, economics, and corporate governance). They also have relevant connections with business, for example, as advisors to industries and British/Chinese governments. Leaders identified also have experience of teaching and leading education in other higher education institutions in the UK (such as the Saïd Business School, Oxford University; and the London School of Economics), demonstrating that they understand the UK environment and standards required, as well as engaging with industry via consultancies and advisory work (for example, with banks such as the Asian Development Bank, the Bermuda Bank, China Power International plc, Siemens Ltd and various international government ministries).

174 The full-time members of academic staff have been recruited by the University (Business School) rather than PHBS-UK, so the team was unable to test the robustness of the PHBS-UK recruitment plans. In mitigation, the team saw evidence of a job advertisement [043b] and application form [123] and staff appointed to deliver currently at PHBS-UK confirmed that they were recruited in accordance with the policy. [M02] Non-academic staff have been recruited according to the Staff Recruitment Policy [016] and hourly-paid staff were recruited according to the process outlined in the Programme and Course Approval Policy [011] where the Head of PHBS-UK can make appointments in consultation with Directors of Studies. All staff confirmed that checks of qualifications were properly made [M02] and, for example, staff had to submit their qualifications for checking by HR before being offered their role. The assessment team concluded that PHBS-UK have staff who are appropriately qualified and skilled to perform their roles effectively.

175 In meetings with senior, [M01] academic and professional support staff, [M02] the assessment team confirmed the process for recruitment and selection of staff. In context, the documents produced by the HR Manager [Anonymised examples of how the recruitment policy is operationalised 113] confirm that PHBS-UK has a very stable staffing base, and there has been very little turnover during the last three years. This is anticipated to change from September 2022 when the new course provision comes on stream. [113] Staff confirmed that the laid-down processes had applied to them when appointed, and also advised the assessment team [M02] that they are encouraged to attend different seminars and conferences, and to be research active/knowledge creators, which is linked to knowledge dissemination. On these bases, the assessment team was able to confirm in the meetings that staff are appropriately qualified and skilled.

176 PHBS-UK also plans to support staff in their learning and teaching. While there are opportunities for staff to develop their research profile, including the employment of two visiting professors to advise and mentor PHBS-UK staff in their research and academic career development, [CPD, 070] there is no formal policy currently that relates to staff development and CPD in learning and teaching. PHBS-UK has identified a need for staff development in this area as it has plans to introduce support for staff in learning and teaching, [122] for example supporting staff to acquire HEA (Advance HE) fellowship and a budget to train staff, including a plan for new staff to undertake a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education at Oxford Brookes University. [123] There are also plans to introduce peer observation of teaching. [123] These plans include observation of classes for new members of staff or staff with poor course evaluations. [123, p.1] The assessment team concludes that the plans for the recruitment and development of qualified and skilled staff are credible, robust and evidence based.

177 There are a range of roles to support the learning experience provided by PHBS-UK. The List of Major Staff Roles and Responsibilities [019] outlines the job descriptions for the key roles of staff at PHBS-UK. The team formed the view that these were appropriate and designed to support students and/or staff because they include people responsible for key aspects of programme and curriculum delivery and quality assurance as well as student

support. In terms of student-facing staff, the main point of contact for most students, and the key person involved in their learning experience, is the course lecturer. They are responsible for all aspects of a course (module) including dealing with any queries [019] and quality assurance. There is also a Senior Tutor and MBA Convenor [019] - currently the two roles are carried out by one person - who deals with broader student experience matters, such as student induction, communicating with students, dealing with students' programme-based queries, liaison with staff and students over issues that arise, as well as managing the MBA programme. [019] The Receptionist also provides general administrative support, manages accommodation and serves as a Health and Safety Officer. The Receptionist currently also provides students with support with the library. [M02] An Academic Course Manager manages the administration of the programme in the UK, and the Student Welfare and Experience Manager provides pastoral support for students and organises events such as careers talks or guest speakers. PHBS-UK also has a Human Resource Manager to create, manage and deliver policies relating to appointments, contracts, inductions, annual reviews and appraisals, staff development and mandatory training. [019] Given the current size of PHBS-UK and the fact that courses are currently designed in partnership with the University (Business School), the team considered that the current roles are sufficient to cater for existing needs, are appropriate for the structure of the organisation [022] and enable the delivery of a high-quality learning experience.

178 Students are very satisfied with the skills of staff at PHBS-UK and believe they have the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience, highlighted in course evaluations, [075] the student submission [114] and the meeting with students. [M03] All evidence gathered via the module evaluation processes showed that students were satisfied with the teaching skills of their staff. For example, Corporate Finance received excellent scores, especially for specific questions relating to the quality of teaching staff. [039c] Many of the course evaluations receive highest scores for the question on the form that most related to the teaching delivery. The student submission [114] reaffirms the positive comments within formal module evaluations. [075] It refers to staff as being 'diligent, experienced and well-trained', also that they are recruited 'from some of the most prestigious universities worldwide'. They claim that 'all members of staff are perfectly selected in order to ensure a high-quality learning experience', that they are 'some of the best worldwide', and 'have created successful ways of teaching'. [114] These high levels of satisfaction were reiterated and reinforced in the meeting with students [M03] where students expressed satisfaction that staff are well qualified, and that they were always ready to help and support them. This evidence shows that students tend to agree that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

179 The assessment team tested whether the learning experience is high quality by observation of teaching [OB01] and by examining the accompanying VLE. The teaching observations showed that classes were well prepared and well designed. As an example, in Research Methods, the course lecturer prepared an 'appetizer' to recap the previous session and establish common prior learning and then built on it afterwards. Lecturers are knowledgeable and up to date with subject knowledge, and at times draw on their experience in industry. For example, in the Artificial Intelligence Analytics class, the tutor demonstrated an excellent relation to current industrial practice via personal experience. Staff are able to manage the online and on-campus classes simultaneously, using technology effectively, communicating clearly and engaging students well by providing appropriate activities. Staff use the VLE as a repository for teaching materials so that students can revisit teaching sessions.

Conclusions

180 As described above, the assessment team considered all the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

181 PHBS-UK's approach to recruitment demonstrates that staff have been recruited, appointed, inducted and supported according to regulations or policies, and in line with job description equivalents. Regulations and policies, including those for diversity and equality in recruitment of staff were demonstrably operational and effective, and sufficient to ensure that there are appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

182 Students agree that there are sufficient appropriately skilled and qualified staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience and emphasised this point consistently in their written and verbal evidence to the team.

183 Teaching observations demonstrated that staff were appropriately skilled to deliver a high-quality learning experience. Classes were well prepared and well organised, and the teaching staff used technology effectively and communicated clearly. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

184 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the assessment 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

185 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.

186 The QAA assessment 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).

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

188 There were no third-party endorsements for the team to consider.

What the evidence shows

189 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

190 PHBS-UK's strategic vision is to create a world-class environment for education featuring state-of-the-art learning facilities, including both research and teaching spaces and support facilities. [Facilities and Learning Resources document 071] To cope with projected growth in student numbers it has submitted a planning application to the local Council for approval towards building better learning facilities. [Provider Submission PS]

191 The current facilities, situated on the outskirts of Oxford, were previously used for educational purposes, and PHBS-UK has developed these facilities since taking them over. The assessment team conducted a tour of the facilities and found that the property is a large, rural campus, with 2 lecture halls, 4 seminar and meeting rooms, 3 reading rooms, and a student common room with a pantry. In addition, there are 2 large multifunction areas, a large open atrium and a campus guesthouse, along with staff offices and an IT room. [Facilities and Learning Resources document 071] The campus currently provides disabled access to all lecture rooms, disabled toilets, gender neutral toilets, closed-captioning for all lectures (provided via online platforms), as well as having welfare policies in place to ensure equal opportunities, disability support, and support for pregnant students and students with infants. The assessment team found that plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of a high-quality academic experience.

192 The detailed plans submitted to the Local Authority in respect of proposed campus development [021] provide for a further 60 student accommodation rooms, a Lecture Hall seating 200, and a Dining Room for 120 people. This is related to the current Business Plan, [032] which projected a growth in student numbers to 265 in 2021-22 and then 375 in 2023-24. This planned growth has not been achieved, at least in part because of COVID-19, but numbers are still forecast to rise to more than 300 by 2023-24. [032] Funding for this major investment in the campus is provided by the University in its capacity as trustee, which in itself is testimony to the support which it offers to PHBS-UK.

193 Staffing plans set out in the PHBS-UK Business Plan [032] recognise the need to support the proposed increased new student cohort, and proposes a commensurate increase in professional support roles on a tapered basis to match planned recruitment.

There is a recognition of the strengths of a flexible workforce, and the proposed staffing model is for a carefully selected mix of full-time and part-time recruits, and over the next three years investment in this area is expected to rise by 25%. In addition, investment in new buildings and facilities is expected to have cost benefits in future, in terms of lower expenditure for maintenance and upkeep of buildings. [032] Other operating costs are projected to increase by 10% to 11% as further investments are made in new library and learning resources facilities.

194 Students' views on the facilities available are wholly positive. In the student submission [114] there are comments regarding the high quality of the facilities, and the beauty of the campus location. Positive comments relate to the amount of space and resources which allow students to focus on their studies, including the Library, IT room, common room, student kitchen and the gym.

195 The Organisation and Management Structure [020] does not identify a separate lead for facilities and resources and within the List of Major Staff - Roles and Responsibilities [019] the only role listed with management accountabilities for facilities, resources or buildings is the Head of PHBS-UK. Senior, [M01] academic and professional support staff confirmed [M02] that the Head of PHBS-UK has overall responsibility for planning facilities and learning resources. The key job roles identified in the organisation and management structure [020] for overall support services infrastructure at an operational level include the Senior Tutor; Student Welfare and Experience Manager; Student Counsellor; Health and Fitness Instructor; Academic Skills Support; IT and Computing Facilities; Subscriptions; Library Resources; Learning Facilities and Resources. Staff roles are supported by job specifications [123] and monitored through a formal annual review process based substantially around student feedback. [123] The assessment team formed the view that these facilities are consistent with a high-quality learning experience.

196 PHBS-UK provides comprehensive pastoral and learning support to ensure students receive a high-quality experience, and that this is overseen by a dedicated Student Experience and Support Manager. [Provider Submission PS] They are responsible for students' personal wellbeing and hold weekly drop-in sessions for students to raise issues requiring support. From the outset of the 2021-22 academic year, PHBS-UK has appointed a Student Counsellor to support students' mental well-being. Referral to see the Student Counsellor is through the Student Welfare and Experience Manager. PHBS-UK has also appointed a Health and Fitness Instructor to take care of students' personal wellbeing, particularly in terms of their health and fitness. The Health and Fitness Instructor organises group exercises twice weekly for students and staff.

197 The assessment team noted the outcomes from a meeting between the course team and the HR Manager, [Management of Learning Support 103] which led to an improvement of lecture hall audiovisual facilities. In addition, in response to comments raised in the Student/Staff Liaison meeting of September 2020, PHBS-UK has recently provided a 24-hour accessible student study area equipped with remote controlled heating/cooling units which enable the students to have a comfortable study area throughout the year. These are clear examples of PHBS-UK changing and improving provision as a result of student engagement. [101]

198 Staff confirmed that [M02] they and the students collaboratively discussed the provision of appropriate facilities and learning resources, for example in the minutes of Staff/Student Liaison meetings [101] staff cited instances of providing enhanced access to data in terms of new platforms (for example, in relation to marketing and statistical data) and textbooks. Process flowcharts [127] state how learning resources acquisition is carried out at different levels of delegation, and staff gave examples of how a specific database was purchased; following a request from students, the staff tested it, and then the purchase was

made. Student noticeboards were also purchased. [Academic and Professional Support Staff Meeting M02] Staff also explained the process of sourcing support from off-campus providers to supplement internal provision of welfare and student support, and highlighted [M02] plans for working in partnership with another local university to develop further access to specialised welfare facilities.

199 Students [Student Meeting M03] indicated that help with resources such as access to the library was consistent - for example in programming, helpful material was presented which was described by students as being 'more than just good'. Online access to journals and research papers is also provided as well as the benefit of the University library. Students reported that if they cannot find something they can go to (or email) student support, or the IT team. [Student Meeting M03] Students confirmed that if they have a non-academic support issue, they go to the Student Experience and Support Manager, and confirmed that they found the support provided helpful. [Student Meeting M03] The assessment team noted that students were happy with both the volume and the quality of the resources available to them.

200 The assessment team's review of facilities, learning resources and support services, [F01] both through a guided tour and during teaching sessions, demonstrated that there are high-quality lecture rooms and laboratory space. PCs provided for students in laboratories and study spaces are supported by external IT technicians, [073] and were of sufficient quantity and of a high specification. VLE facilities are basic but sufficient - at a minimum level they act as a repository for course slides, but some courses provide further details such as assignments. The assessment team formed the view that facilities and resources at PHBS-UK would facilitate a high-quality academic experience.

Conclusions

201 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

202 Strategies and plans for facilities, learning resources and student support services are credible, realistic and demonstrably linked to the delivery of successful academic and professional outcomes for students. In particular, plans for a significant enhancement of premises are well advanced and proportionate in relation to the proposed expansion of the student cohort; providing support facilities both academic and pastoral which are clearly student-focused. The demonstrable improvements to existing resources such as the recruitment of a personal trainer for students demonstrates that PHBS-UK is responsive to the views of students and staff in this regard. Students praised the facilities available to them, confirming that they are more than sufficient and appropriate for their needs.

203 Staff met by the assessment team understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to the provision, maintenance and upkeep of resources, and the assessment team's own assessment of the facilities and learning resources confirms they are of high quality, and sufficient both in quantity and quality for the needs of the student cohort. PHBS-UK has dedicated policies and processes which clearly address and provide facilities for students with specific needs. Therefore, the assessment team concludes that the Core practice is met.

204 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects all relevant evidence described

in the QSR evidence matrix and leads the assessment team to have a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

206 The QAA assessment 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).

What the evidence shows

207 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

208 The PHBS-UK Governance Code of Practice [097] specifically provides for students to be members of the Academic Board and to share identical responsibilities with all external members of the Board and confirms that they will not be excluded from any discussions unless they have a declared conflict of interest. This commitment extends to encouraging student members to participate fully in the work of the Academic Board. The Code of Practice [097] also requires the establishment of a framework which offers opportunities for student engagement, including student induction meetings, termly Staff/Student Liaison meetings, and 'town hall' meetings every semester. Reports on student matters, presented by the Senior Tutor, are a standing item on Academic Board agendas. [025]

209 The wider process for gathering student feedback [099] confirms that PHBS-UK conducts Staff/Student Liaison Meetings between the student body and the Academic Management Team four times every academic year. [Quality Management Structure Chart 022, Student Liaison Meeting Terms of Reference and Membership 076, Student Liaison meeting minutes 078] All students are invited to attend these meetings, especially student representatives and chairs of student committees, and their purpose is to engage the student community and to provide student feedback on the effectiveness of day-to-day academic management duties and activities, ensuring the continuous improvement of student experience, the maintenance of standards, and ensuring that policies and services improve the students' learning experience. [076] The assessment team examined minutes of these meetings and confirmed that they were operated in line with requirements and provided an opportunity for student views to be heard. For example, in the December 2021 meeting, [078] students commenced by confirming that all actions agreed at the previous meeting had been implemented in full, and went on to express views, both individually and collectively, in relation to each course.

210 Students are represented on the Academic Board by student representatives. [098] Noting that the student cohort numbers are small, the process of identifying such representatives begins with deliberation by the Academic Management Team, who identify potential representatives by reference to a range of factors, including academic performance, record of participation, integrity and social standing amongst the peer group. If the students identified are willing to go forward for the role, their nominations go to the Head of PHBS-UK who makes the final decision. [Information on appointment of student reps 098] While there is no formal training in place for student representatives, they are mentored individually by the Senior Tutor. [Student Liaison Meeting Terms of Reference 074]

211 At the end of every study block (that is, four times a year), individual feedback is gathered from all students by the completion of a Course Assessment Questionnaire, [075] which seeks to identify their satisfaction and concerns with their learning experience at the end of the study block. Where satisfaction is below the 90% target threshold, tutors are

required to identify actions to improve student satisfaction in their future delivery. [Course Evaluation Report 023] If the concerns can be generalised (such as introducing more practical, industry-based examples into course delivery), course lecturers in the next study block will be informed [Information on process for gathering Student feedback 099] to enable them to incorporate agreed actions into their delivery. Outcomes are recorded in the minutes of the Student Liaison Committee, [078] which evidence that student comments are actioned.

212 The University (Business School) also holds a 'Town Hall' (University term for a group student meeting across the UK and China), which meets once or twice per year to enable students to provide feedback to the Business School in China. [Meeting with Students M03] The minutes of these meetings are considered at, and formally recorded in, the Student Liaison meetings [078] which confirm actions agreed and taken. These are then made available to all PHBS-UK students. Given the size of the provider, the assessment team concluded that these arrangements demonstrate that PHBS-UK actively engages students, both individually and collectively, in the quality of their academic experience.

213 There are numerous examples of PHBS-UK changing and improving students' learning experience as a result of student engagement, arising from course evaluations, [023] Student Liaison Meeting minutes, [078] and specific examples of PHBS-UK making changes as a result of student feedback. [101] These include a request from students to reconsider the intensity of the four-hour teaching sessions, as a result of which more breaks were incorporated into the session to enable students to refresh and refocus; [Student Liaison Minutes 078] requests for additional equipment in student accommodation which was provided; [078] and requests for academic and non-academic support or changes to course delivery for students who had tested positive for COVID-19. [078] In other instances, one tutor agreed to slow down the pace of delivery to improve student understanding; [078] other sessions were revised to introduce more practical examples; while one final assessment was changed from a theory examination to a project in answer to student requests for more relevant assessment. [078] Changes made are recorded in the minutes of the Student Liaison Committee, [078] which confirm to all students the action taken in response to their feedback. All of these instances enabled the assessment team to conclude that PHBS-UK's approach has impacts which demonstrate changes or improvements as a result of their application.

214 Students report that PHBS-UK engages them in the quality of their learning experience; that they find staff approachable; feel that their feedback is listened to and acted upon, and that they noticed changes in taught sessions which were delivered after the feedback was given. [Student Meeting M03] The student submission confirms the breadth of channels for students to offer their feedback including the lead student representative, course representatives (for individual courses), Student Welfare and Experience Manager, Senior Tutor and the Head of PHBS-UK. [114]

Conclusions

215 As described above, the assessment team considered all the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

216 The assessment team formed the view that PHBS-UK actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. Arrangements in

place are contextualised to the size of the current student cohort, which facilitates the use of informal and formal contact between students and staff teams. There are numerous examples of PHBS-UK changing and improving students' learning experience as a result of student engagement in both academic and non-academic matters, including changes to the duration of lectures, and improvement of facilities for resident students. Students confirmed that they have numerous opportunities to provide feedback via the bi-annual 'Town Hall' meetings, Staff/Student Liaison meetings and through course evaluations. Students reported that PHBS-UK engages them in the quality of their learning experience, that they find staff approachable and feel that their feedback is listened to and acted upon. In meetings with the assessment team students demonstrated how engaged they are with their learning and the quality of their educational experience.

217 PHBS-UK's approach to engaging students is robust and credible, and structured in line with the Governance Code of Practice. Arrangements in place are demonstrably effective in engaging students in the quality of their education and provide for students' views and feedback on academic and pastoral matters to be collected, considered and acted upon. There are complementary channels by which students are advised of the matters raised, and the actions taken. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

218 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the assessment 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

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

220 The QAA assessment 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).

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

222 Numbers and types of complaints and appeals received, and outcomes (including time to outcome), and examples of specific complaints and appeals were not considered because at the time of the review visit, PHBS-UK had not received any formal complaints or appeals. However, a single informal instance was noted and is discussed below.

What the evidence shows

223 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

224 Complaints and appeals in relation to individual courses (modules) are dealt with by PHBS-UK, while those relating to the overall award classification are the responsibility of the University (Business School). PHBS-UK has in place a complaints and appeals procedure for applicants and registered students [Provider Submission PS] and confirms that students are provided with access to information about complaints and academic appeals procedures through the student handbook [065b] and the UK campus intranet, [080a] and those key points are explained to students during induction. [086]

225 The PHBS-UK Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure [013] sets out their approach to handling both complaints and academic appeals and states that it has been produced with reference to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) good practice framework. It explains the purpose of the procedure, defines key terms and provides details on time limits. This is supported by the student handbook [065b] and the induction process, [086] which are the main mechanisms for communicating the Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure to students.

226 While the Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure [013] states that the students can seek advice from the OIA or the awarding organisation, PHBS-UK confirmed that it is not currently a member of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE); however, there are plans to seek such membership following successful registration with the Office for Students. [Final Meeting with Senior Staff M05]

227 In relation to complaints, PHBS-UK's approach has three stages to the process: stage 1 (informal resolution), stage 2 (formal) and stage 3 (review hearing). Stage 1 is handled by the Course Lecturer, stage 2 by the Course Lecturer and Academic Management Team and stage 3 by a panel. [Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure 013] In relation to appeals, PHBS-UK has a localised academic appeals process which is used for appeals relating to courses. This has three stages to the process: stage 1 (informal resolution), stage 2 (formal) and stage 3 (review hearing). Stage 1 is handled by the Course Lecturer, stage 2 by the Senior Tutor and stage 3 by a panel. Stage 2 also includes the

external examiner. [Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure 013] The assessment team formed the view that the process set out is fair and transparent because it provides for a structured and staged process, taking student complaints and appeals through logical steps to a conclusion.

228 The procedure [013] states that the stage 3 panel meeting will include an independent assessor and members of the examination board to which the student will be invited and may be accompanied by a friend. PHBS-UK confirmed that the independent assessor would be a 'suitable faculty member from a UK Peer University to assess the evidence and provide an impartial as well as independent opinion based on their experience and expertise'. [084] Once the internal PHBS-UK process has been completed, and the complainant or appellant remains dissatisfied, they then have the right to take the matter through the equivalent University processes.

229 In the case of awards (as opposed to courses), complaints and appeals are dealt with directly by the University (Business School) in line with its procedures. These are different to those at PHBS-UK but provide for complaints to be considered by the University (Business School) Head of Administrative Offices, and for appeals to be considered via the Masters' Programme Office, including referrals to examiners for remarking if errors are found. Students are advised of these approaches during induction. [129]

230 Students can access the PHBS-UK Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure via the UK campus intranet [Information provided to students on complaints and appeals 080a] and via the student handbook. [065b] The handbook provides a clear distinction between informal and formal complaints and appeals, and cross-references detailed procedures in the form of the full complaints and appeals policy on the website, [080a] advising students to access and familiarise themselves with the full policy. The Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure [013] provides clear definitions of both complaints and appeals and refers to it being based on the OIA good practice framework. There are deadlines for both the submission of an appeal, and for the different stages of the response, and these make it clear to students what the stages of the process are and when responses can be expected. Students have the right to be accompanied during this process, and at formal panel stage there is a deliberate element of independence brought by an external appointee. The assessment team concluded that the electronic and paper-based information for students around complaints and appeals is clear and accessible.

231 The assessment team did not consider examples of formal complaints and academic appeals as PHBS-UK reported that no formal complaints or academic appeals have been received at the time of the review visit. It was therefore not possible to scrutinise complaints and/or academic appeals to check whether they had been dealt with according to PHBS-UK's procedures. [Data on complaints and appeals 081]

232 Students did not raise any concerns about the clarity or accessibility of the procedures or their application. They confirmed that they were aware of how to raise a complaint or appeal and knew the difference between them. They had not had reason to raise a formal complaint but had given feedback through feedback mechanisms and their concerns had been listened to. [Student Meeting M03] The student submission [114] confirms this view and states that there are very clear guidelines and channels in operation to address concerns, complaints and appeals.

233 PHBS-UK advised that it had received one stage 1 (informal) academic appeal and paperwork relating to this appeal was reviewed. [Evidence of how informal complaints are recorded and actioned 107] The Senior Tutor conducted the review in line with the procedure and presented the findings to the student, who accepted the outcome and the

reasons why. The assessment team independently had this confirmed in the student meeting. [M03]

234 Staff from PHBS-UK [Academic and professional support staff M02] understood the difference between complaints and academic appeals, and this is underpinned for all staff by guidance in the staff handbook. [082a] They confirmed that they had not received any formal complaints or appeals training but had dealt with informal complaints via student feedback mechanisms and had dealt with the informal academic appeal as noted above.

Conclusions

235 As described above, the assessment team considered all the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

236 PHBS-UK has developed fair, transparent and accessible complaints and appeals procedures that are robust and credible. This is because there is a Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure in place, the requirements are understood, and the contract between PHBS-UK and the University (Business School) in China enables English requirements to take precedence. PHBS-UK procedures for handling complaints and appeals are definitive, fair and transparent, and the team considers that these would deliver timely outcomes in the event of a formal complaint or appeal being made.

237 To date, PHBS-UK has not had to deal with any formal complaints or appeals. Students who met the team, supported by evidence in the student submission, were unanimous that the systems were fair, transparent and accessible, and that the difference between complaints and appeals was clear.

238 PHBS-UK's procedures for handling complaints and appeals are accessible to students. This is because they are provided to students both via the student handbook and on the internet for easy access. The assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

239 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix, albeit that the assessment team has not had the opportunity to test the systems in operation, as there have been no formal complaints or appeals made to date. Therefore, the assessment 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

240 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.

241 The QAA assessment 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).

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

243 There were no third-party endorsements available in this regard.

What the evidence shows

244 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

245 The agreement between the University (Business School) and PHBS-UK [118] has established a governance structure [020] within which PHBS's Academic Board [004] independently monitors the standard and quality of its courses, including the quality of its campus, staff, courses and the student experience, in line with the academic regulations of the University (Business School). The Academic Board is also responsible for developing research capability including doctoral and post-doctoral research and improving academic life and the academic environment. In recognition of this independence, PHBS-UK has developed its own policies and procedures [087c] within its Quality Manual, including 59 separate policies and procedures covering welfare, academic, human resources and administrative aspects to support monitoring and ensure students have a high-quality experience.

246 Two key PHBS-UK policies that inform partnership work are the Programme and Course Approval Policy [011] and the draft policy and process for the development of new and collaborative programmes. [118] For example, the latter requires evaluation of any new programmes and deliberation on the choice of partners for potential collaboration. The Programme and Course Approval Policy and Procedure [011] also requires consideration of the quality of the curriculum, strategies for continuous improvement and matters relating to teaching, learning and assessment with PHBS-UK at stage one before consideration by a partner awarding body at stage two.

247 The assessment team saw evidence of the implementation of this policy in developments of provision with the [REDACTED] [052c] The team saw evidence of proposals relating to this programme and confirmed that they are comprehensive and support the deliberations between PHBS-UK and [REDACTED] on shared key quality priorities such as student admissions, appointment of staff, delivery plans, study approaches, management of quality and approaches to supporting students.

248 In relation to arrangements with the [REDACTED] [Collaboration agreement 052b] and [REDACTED], [Proposal 052a] the assessment team was able to conclude in each case that the partnership arrangements had been considered

through the staged arrangements set out in the programme and course approval policy, [011] with the requisite approvals at each stage. For example, the process with the latter took in the initial proposal; [033c] evidence of the internal scrutiny required by the policy; [033d – internal PHBS-UK meetings during August 2021] Academic Board meeting discussion and approval to proceed; [033e – Academic Board Agenda and 033f – Academic Board Minutes – September 2021] and finally referral to the University (Business School). [033g] Academic Board minutes [033f] specifically reference comments from independent members in relation to qualitative aspects. On this basis, the assessment team formed the view that PHBS-UK's governance framework and relevant policies and procedures enable it to ensure that the courses it offers in partnership with other providers are of high quality.

249 The students [M03] confirm that PHBS-UK uses effective strategies for teaching, assessing and monitoring student progress against learning outcomes. They highlight the inclusive way in which they are supported in their learning both in the UK and in China as they have specific named contact points on both sites, and clear guidelines to raise issues, concerns and complaints or appeals with PHBS-UK and the University (Business School). The overall student feedback on teaching [099] shows that the course evaluations are consistently high in all categories relating to quality, teaching content and materials and methodology, attitudes and effectiveness. For example, in Business Mathematics the best aspects of the course from the student perspective are the support for their learning. [099] Again, for the Chinese Course Level 1, the students comment positively as to how the staff member concerned monitors their progress. They also appreciated the opportunity to communicate openly with the University (Business School) at all times, for example, during the 'Town Hall' sessions and especially during the COVID-19 lockdown period. [100] Based on the scrutiny of these different student feedback documents, the assessment team confirms that students are positive about the courses that are delivered by PHBS-UK under its agreement with the University (Business School).

250 PHBS-UK's Academic Board applies the powers delegated to it by the University (Business School) to ensure that the quality of its courses is in line with the University (Business School) quality requirements for academic and pastoral support. This is evidenced within the minutes of the Academic Board [033f] in relation to discussions on further development of the support available for students to improve their engagement and to offer further welfare activities. The arrangements within potential partnership agreements with the three other universities [052a; 052b; 052c] also ensure in each case that the main quality issues are explicitly recognised and addressed. For example, the proposal for the International Legal Practice LLM and Business Communication Study Programme between PHBS-UK and [REDACTED] [052c] highlights responsibilities for the appointment of teaching teams, and the managers to oversee the programme management priorities such as student concerns, teaching quality and the general oversight of quality management at different stages of the programme. The assessment team determined these developments are in line with PHBS's Programme and Course Approval Policy and Procedure [011] and its Collaborative Policy [016] and therefore confirm that PHBS's existing collaborative arrangements and potential partnership arrangement support the maintenance of high quality and align with the requirements of relevant policy requirements.

251 The external examiner annual report for 2019-20 [009] confirms that the student handbook, programme specification, module descriptor and mark criteria are appropriate. The assessment strategy and processes, and feedback process were confirmed to be consistent, helpful and informative. Particular comment was made in relation to the effective use of online teaching and assessments during government restrictions. [009] On the basis of its scrutiny of these reports, the assessment team determined that external examiners confirm that courses delivered by PHBS-UK are of a high quality.

252 Senior staff explained how programme proposals were initiated at PHBS-UK for the

University (Business School) to approve and explained how joint plans are in place for PHBS-UK to initiate partnership development, conduct market research, consider the vocational context of the development before progressing to proposing programmes to the University (Business School) for consideration and approval. [M01] They explained the approach within the draft collaborative policy. [118] Academic staff [M02] spoke of their engagement in meetings with the University (Business School), including representation on University (Business School) strategy committees. They talked too of their autonomy to shape the delivery of the syllabus. University (Business School) staff [M04] explained how they worked collaboratively with PHBS-UK in areas such as admission, new development and staff appointments. They also advised that they undertake reviews of the different activities undertaken by PHBS-UK staff, acknowledging that the latter have the autonomy to carry out certain functions such as deciding on teaching and learning strategies for the different courses. The final meeting with PHBS-UK senior staff [M05] confirmed their role in the development of the partnership between the University (Business School) and ██████ at the ██████. Based on the discussion with PHBS-UK staff and staff from the University (Business School) the assessment team determined that PHBS-UK staff are aware of their responsibilities and implement them as expected within respective agreements.

Conclusions

253 As described above, the assessment team considered all of the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

254 PHBS-UK's approach to its arrangements with the University (Business School) is governed by the agreement between both centres, which provides for an independent Academic Board to monitor standards and quality and maintain the responsibility for ensuring compliance with both the English higher education regulatory framework and the academic regulations of the University (Business School). PHBS-UK's responsibilities under this agreement include, among other things, the establishment and maintenance of the quality of its campus, staff, courses and the student experience.

255 An independent Academic Board is established within PHBS-UK and approved by the University (Business School) in accordance with its binding obligations to provide the necessary infrastructure for it to operate in line with academic regulations. The development of additional England-specific policies and procedures by PHBS-UK provides additional reference points for ensuring the quality of its existing and planned courses and programmes. The team concluded that these arrangements are clear and comprehensive and operate in line with its governance and policy requirements.

256 Senior, academic and professional support staff explained how they worked successfully with the University (Business School). Senior staff clarified their role in the initiation of new partners and new courses. Academic staff explained how they participated in strategic committee meetings with the University (Business School), and independently shaped the teaching and learning for their teaching sessions to meet the contextual priorities of their students. Senior staff clarified their role in the initiation of new partners and new courses. University (Business School) staff confirmed their role in reviewing programmes and approving new courses and partners. The team was satisfied that staff from both PHBS-UK and the University (Business School) fully understand their individual and collective responsibilities for ensuring the high-quality delivery of courses offered at the former.

257 PHBS-UK's involvement in the planned partnerships with the three UK universities has been in the development and arrangements for their potential delivery at its campus. All of these established and proposed partnership arrangements address and allocate responsibilities for ensuring the maintenance of high-quality learning experiences for potential students. They include comprehensive consideration of appropriate governance structures, and operational responsibilities for all matters relating to the management and monitoring of learning, teaching and assessment experiences. The team therefore determined that these arrangements are robust and sufficiently credible to ensure a high-quality academic experience for students on its current and potential future courses and programmes.

258 External examiner reports confirm that the quality of the courses that PHBS-UK offers is high in terms of teaching, learning and assessment. Positive comments are noted especially in relation to the supportiveness of assessment processes and the consistent and helpful student feedback practices all of which lead to positive external examiner reports. Therefore, the assessment team concludes that the Core practice is met.

259 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

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

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

261 The QAA assessment 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).

How any samples of evidence were constructed

262 A sample of assessed student work was selected providing all components of assessment for three courses (modules) of three credits each. The sample covered both quantitative and qualitative modules. It included a minimum of three students on each course: at least one at threshold level for each course, as well as a failure, where applicable (one module only).

What the evidence shows

263 The assessment team's analysis of the evidence led to the following observations.

264 PHBS-UK provides comprehensive learning support to ensure students receive a high-quality academic experience, and their chances of successful outcomes are maximised, and this is overseen by a dedicated Student Experience and Welfare Manager. [Provider Submission PS] Approaches are detailed in a comprehensive handbook provided by PHBS-UK to all students which provides information on all aspects of academic and student life. [Student Handbook 065b] As part of induction, students are navigated through the student handbook and other relevant information, [Student Induction Agenda 085d] including orientation to the UK and to the programme of study; introduction to library and learning resources facilities; and introduction to student life and support services.

265 The Learning Support Policy [003] states that students who disclose that they require additional support needs will be invited for a personal interview with the Senior Tutor and/or the Academic Management Team to discuss and agree to a learning support plan. Learning support will be provided on an appropriate basis which will include 1:1 support, group support, classroom support, drop-in sessions, and IT support. PHBS-UK confirmed that it has one student who declared a learning support need when on course and the team was able to evidence the arrangements put in place. [Example of needs assessments, [106] Letter of Learning Needs Provision [085.1]]

266 In relation to academic and professional outcomes, PHBS-UK has facilitated curricular and extracurricular activities including coaching on interview techniques, academic writing courses, research proposal writing, sessions on academic writing, thesis writing, seminars by industry professionals, and company visits [redacted] while MBA students have access to a business mentor. [Student support plans 105] PHBS-UK has also run dissertation progress meetings with students to check progress in their dissertation which is separate from, and complementary to, their dissertation supervision. [Meeting with Senior Staff M01]

267 PHBS-UK also offers a Business Chinese course which focuses on working with developing effective business relationships and businesses working together and helps students to develop the skills needed to work in multi-business environments. [Meeting with Academic and Professional Services Staff M02] Based on the above, the team formed the

view that PHBS-UK has policies in place identifying the approach to student support, including identification and monitoring of needs of individual students.

268 PHBS-UK plans to further support students in achieving academic and professional outcomes in relation to academic support (for example, careers, academic writing, English, IT, computers and systems support). [105] For instance, the focus of the academic writing course has been changed from the language perspective to a greater emphasis on the academic perspective, such as presenting ideas into a coherent research proposal and/or dissertation, how to write a literature review, and how to write a research methodology. Future plans include expanding this course so that it serves the needs of all students (not just, as at present, those who need English language support); and expanding the recently introduced thesis workshop into a full credit course. [105]

269 PHBS-UK also has plans to develop these academic writing sessions into compulsory sessions and establish a Chinese language learning and teaching centre [Student support 105] via the University Business School, where students can access the language partner project that enables them to further practise their Chinese language skills. [Meeting with Academic and Professional Services Staff M02]

270 The students advised the assessment team that they have access to a regular seminar programme (every two weeks). Seminars are typically delivered by external industry speakers and include a discussion session. Examples of topics covered in the sessions include entrepreneurship and its importance for the economy, private equity, arts and artificial intelligence. [Student Submission 114] The students confirmed that the sessions have been helpful to them [Student Meeting M03, Student Liaison Meeting Minutes 078, Student Submission 114] and that PHBS-UK has been responsive to requests they have made for specific sessions to be added to the schedule such as a careers fair. [Student Meeting M03, Meeting with Academic and Professional Services Staff M02] Monitoring at course level is undertaken in detail, albeit focused upon classroom delivery, and from these the annual cross border courses report to the University [037] affirms that all students have good levels of satisfaction with courses and support provided by PHBS-UK during the year.

271 The team reviewed a sample of assessed student work and confirmed that students were provided with clear advice for future work, which was both comprehensive and helpful. In assessing timeliness, the assessment team discussed this with students in the meeting [M03] who confirmed that they always get very quick verbal feedback on submitted work, and the written feedback after that. Students particularly praised the quick verbal feedback as something which helped them with future assignments and confirmed that they had no concerns at all with the timeliness of the feedback they received. Based on the work reviewed, and the discussions with students, the team formed the view that students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback.

272 Students also confirmed to the assessment team that they receive helpful feedback from tutors. This includes verbal feedback at the end of class sessions; feedback on mid-term assessments; and feedback on end-of-course assessments. Students stated that the feedback supported their learning and helped them to improve future assessed work. [Student Meeting M03]

273 The staff stated that they support students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes through providing them with regular feedback, both verbally and through providing feedback on mid-term and end-of-term assessment. [Meeting with Academic and Professional Services Staff M02]

Conclusions

274 As described above, the assessment team considered all the evidence submitted [Annex 1] to form a judgement as to whether the provider 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 assessment team ensured that its judgement was consistent with all other assessments and remained outcomes focused. The team's conclusions, based on the evidence considered, are detailed below.

275 The assessment team concluded that PHBS-UK supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. This is because assessed student work demonstrates that students are given comprehensive, helpful and timely feedback. Staff (both academic and professional support) understand their role in supporting student achievement and provide support and development opportunities through curricular and extracurricular activities. Students agree that they are adequately supported to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. This is because they receive helpful feedback from tutors on both mid-term and end-of-term assessments, which both supports their learning and helps them to improve future assessed work.

276 PHBS-UK's approach to student support facilitates successful academic and professional outcomes, because it has in place policies to underpin student support and staffing resources to support students. These include a dedicated Student Experience and Welfare Manager, supported by a comprehensive student handbook, underpinned by operational processes. There are a series of curricular and extracurricular activities which focus on providing support to students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes. These include academic writing, company visits, seminars from industry professionals and IT-based support. Based upon all of the above, the assessment team concludes, therefore, that the Core practice is met.

277 The evidence underpinning this judgement reflects the evidence described in the QSR evidence matrix. Therefore, the assessment team has a high degree of confidence in this judgement.

Annex 1 - Evidence List

- 001 Non-academic misconduct policy
- 002 Equality and Diversity Policy Statement
- 003 – Learning Support Policy
- 004 – Academic Board Terms of Reference
- 005 – Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure
- 006 – Academic Regulations
- 007 – Admissions Policy and Procedure
- 008 – Assessment Policy
- 009 – External Examiners and Examination Boards
- 010 – Moderation Policy and Procedure
- 011 – Programme and Course Approval Policy and Procedures
- 012 – Student Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy
- 013 – Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure
- 014 – Student Fees Refund Policy
- 015 – Student Protection Plan
- 016 – Staff Recruitment Policy
- 017 – AASCB report and AMBA report
- 018 – Appointment of External Member – Academic Board
- 019 –List of Major Staff – Roles and Responsibilities
- 020 –Organisation and Management Structure
- 021 Development Plan of PHBS-UK
- 022 –Quality Management Structure Chart
- 023 – Sample of Course Evaluation Report and Course Improvements
- 024 – Double degree programme proposal and scrutiny
- 025 – Sample of Academic Board Meeting minutes
- 026 – Academic Management Team Meeting Minutes
- 027 – Sample of Exam Board Meeting Minutes
- 028 – Example of Learning Support Letter
- 029 Sample of Lecturer and Course Delivery Response to Student Feedback
- 030 Sample of Moderation Report
- 031 Annual Programme Reports
- 032 Business Plan
- 032a Financial Forecast Table
- 033 Governance Code of Practice
- 033a Organization and Management Structure
- 033b Programme and Course Approval Policy Structure
- 033c █████ Joint Degree Programme Proposal
- 033d Evidence of internal scrutiny of █████ Joint Degree Proposal
- 033e Academic Board Meeting Email
- 033f Academic Board Meeting Minutes
- 033g Reply from PHBS-Shenzhen re █████ Joint Degree Proposal
- 034a Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures
- 034b Sample of Moderation Report where plagiarism was detected
- 034c Exam Board Meeting Minutes AY2019-20 Block 4
- 034d Viva Report
- 034e External Examiner's email confirmation
- 035 Governance and Quality and Standard Management Chart
- 035a Governance Code of Practice
- 036 Grading criteria in Student Handbook and Course Lecturer Handbook
- 036a Programme Handbook - curriculum of Cross-border study MA Finance and MA Management
- 037 Cross-Border Programme annual report

037 Short-term study programme report
 038 Programme Handbook
 038a NOT USED
 038b External Opinion on MA Finance Programme
 038c National Qualification Framework of Level 7 Programmes: case study of the University vs UCL Master in Finance
 039 Scrutiny Form – AY2020/21 Corporate Finance
 039a Marked Sheets – AY2020/21 Corporate Finance
 039b Moderation Report - AY2020/21 Corporate Finance
 039c Course Evaluation - AY2020/21 Corporate Finance
 039d Cross-Border Study Programme Review – AY2020/21
 040 AY 2021/22 Blk 1 Exam Board Meeting Minutes
 040a Re-marking Moderation
 040b Report 3. External Examiner's Confirmation Email
 040c Re-marking Scripts
 041 Syllabus of Academic Writing AY2019/20
 041a Syllabus of Corporate Finance AY2020/21
 041b Syllabus of Microeconomics/Managerial Economics AY2021/22
 041c Dissertation Specification
 042 Course Lecturers Handbook
 NOT USED
 042b Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures
 042c Course Lecturer Induction Agenda
 042d Exam Board Meeting Minutes AY2019-20 Blk 2
 042e Exam Board Meeting Minutes AY2019-20 Blk 3
 043 Sample of █████ Degree Programme
 043a Sample of █████-the University Degree Programme
 043b Job Advertisement for Management Academic
 043c Sample of applicant CV
 044 Email from Dean's office about approval of programme
 045 not used
 046 Minutes of Curriculum Meeting 2019/11/21
 046a Minutes of Curriculum Meeting 2020/10/15
 047 Curriculum of programmes (available on internet)
 048 NOT USED
 049 Student Attendance, Engagement, and Absence Policy (034)
 049a NOT USED
 049b NOT USED
 049c Sample of Attendance
 050 Certificate of Award (English)
 050a 2. Certificate of Award (Chinese)
 051 Graduate Student Transcript
 051a 2. Exam Board Meeting Minutes AY2019/20, AY2020/21, AY2021/22
 052 █████ Double Degree Proposal has been suspended by Dean's Office pending response from █████ (email)
 052a █████ Proposal
 052b █████ Collaboration on International MBA agreement (memo signed on 19 Jan 2022)
 052c Proposal for Collaboration with █████ on International Legal Practice and Business Communication Study
 053 Examination Board and External Examiners Terms of Reference
 054 Minutes of exam board meeting
 054a External examiner reports
 054b Moderation Form
 055 NOT USED

056 Academic Management Team ToR
056a 2. AMT Meeting Minutes 02/11/2021
056b AMT Meeting Minutes 24/11/2021
056c AMT Meeting Minutes 10/01/2021
056d AMT Meeting Minutes 17/01/2021
057 NOT USED
058 NOT USED
058a Assessment Policy
058b Moderation Policy and Procedures
058c External Examiner and Examination Board ToR
059 Admission Logs
060 NOT USED
061 Course curriculum on internet (URL+ comment)
061a Policies and regulations on internet (URL+ comments)
062 Agreement with [REDACTED] Marketing (an affiliate of [REDACTED])
062a Variation Agreement with Inuni Marketing (an affiliate of [REDACTED])
062b 3. GDPR Agreement with [REDACTED]
063 Hands-on learning from senior staff
063a Admissions interview questionnaire
064 Consumer Law Protection Policy and Procedures
065 NOT USED
065a Sample of course syllabus Sample of ACM email to students regarding course syllabi
065b Student handbook
066 Head of PHBS-UK CV
066a Director of Programmes CV
066b Micro-economics lecturer CV
067 Equality and Diversity Policy Statement
067a Staff Recruitment Policy
067b Recruitment process
067c Sample of applicant CV (anonymised)
068 AACSB Report and AMBA report
068a External report on Cross-border study programme for quality and standard reference to UK peer universities
069 Staff Handbook
070 CPD
071 Facilities and Learning Resources Document 052
072 Online Resources
072a Textbook Library
072b Database
072c Journal Subscription
073 Bluespires Contract
074 Student Liaison Meeting ToR
074a Student Representative Appointment Letter
074b Academic Board Meeting Minutes 10/09/2021
075 Course Evaluation AY2019/20 2
075a Course Evaluation AY2020/21
075b 3. Course Evaluation AY2021/22
076 Student Liaison Meeting ToR and membership
077 Student Representative Appointment Letter
077a Academic Board Meeting Minutes 10/09/2021
078 Student Liaison Meeting Minutes AY2020/21
078a Student Liaison Meeting Minutes AY2021/22
078b Emails sent to lecturers for further actions to improve their teaching

079 Quality Manual
080 NOT USED
080a Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy and Regulations on the Internet
081 Data on Complaints and Appeals – nil return
082 NOT USED
083 NOT USED
084 External Referee in the relevant subject/administrative field from a UK peer university
085 Disability and Mental Health Support
085a 2. Disability Policy
085b Equal Opportunities Policy
085c NOT USED
085d Student Induction Agenda
085e AMT Meeting Minutes
085f Letter of Learning Needs Provision
086 Student Induction Agenda AY2021/22
087 Staff Induction Programme
087a Employee Handbook
087b Fire Marshals – Fire Alarm Procedure
087c List of PHBS-UK Policies and Procedures
087d Timesheet Policy
087e Course Lecturer Induction
088 NOT USED
089 Safeguarding Policy
089a Disability and Mental Health Support
089b Disability Policy
089c Equal Opportunities Policy
090 Confirmation of student numbers
091 Admissions records
092 Schedule of complaints
093 Timetable of classes during the visit
094 Request for information post Team Planning Meeting
095 Information for and training of recruitment agents
096 Postgraduate admission criteria of Peking University
097 Strategies for engaging students in academic governance
098 Appointment of Student representatives
099 Student feedback and student survey process
100 Actions arising from Student Liaison meetings
101 Changes and improvements as a result of student engagement
102 Student achievement data and outcomes
103 Management of learning support
104 Approaches to identifying students support needs
105 Supporting students in achieving academic and professional outcomes
106 Needs assessments and additional support needs
107 Informal Complaints record
108 Programme and course approval joint working statement
109 Full Academic Regulations from the University
110 Examples of final transcripts of studies
111 NOT USED
112 Staff Induction processes
113 Anonymised examples of how the recruitment policy is operationalised
114 Student submission
115 Blank admissions form
116 Collaborative policy

117 S3 admissions files
118 Admissions criteria with PHBS-UK signed contract
119 Admissions – Disability statement
120 Approval of programmes and academic standards
121 Masters Degree criteria
122 Plan for review and enhancement of quality standards
123 Staff Performance Review and Training
124 Exit awards
125 Presentation slides
126 Sample minutes of staff meetings
127 PHBS-UK Processes
128 Additional evidence during the review
129 Student complaints and academic appeals at the school
130 List of meeting attendees
131 Signed MoU between the University and [REDACTED]
132 Response to additional evidence request post Desk Based Analysis
133 Admissions criteria on Peking University website
134 Staffing details on school website [<https://english.phbs.theUniversity.edu.cn/faculty/faculty/>], accessed 02.03.2022
F01 Facilities Tour
M01 Meeting with Senior Staff
M02 Meeting with Academic and Professional Support Staff
M03 Meeting with Students
M04 Meeting with Peking Business School Officials
M05 Final Meeting
OB01 Observation of taught sessions
PS – Provider Submission
S01 – Sample of Assessed Student work
S02 – Sample of Admissions Records
T01 – Tour of Facilities

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