London School of Business and Management [LSBM]
TEF Year Three provider submission

Introduction:
Student President, LSBM Student Guild

Alongside LSBM staff, the LSBM Student Guild is committed to the principles of equality and accessibility in all areas of higher education, from the moment an applicant considers LSBM as a possible location for study, right through to study, graduation and beyond. Students are represented at all levels of LSBM's governance and management structure, not only reviewing operations, but also planning strategically for the future. This strong strategic partnership ensures that students are at the heart of what we do together, and I, as Student President of the LSBM Student Guild, recommend the quality of the education and support provided.

I am currently halfway through my presidential year. Already, it has been a year of many accomplishments. For me, the highlight was my participation in the prestigious Independent Higher Education Annual Conference, which took place between 27 and 28 November 2017 here in London. This annual conference was a chance for leading academics and thinkers across the higher education spectrum to come together and discuss best practice, network and celebrate outstanding academic endeavour in the independent sector.

We were extremely proud and excited for LSBM to win the **'Excellence in Student Community Award'** that was announced at the conference. The citation for the award was:

> ***The Excellence in Student Community Award, sponsored by The Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP), went to the London School of Business and Management for the work of their Student Guild, Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) project and anti-extremism Encourage programme.***

There were five criteria upon which the award was judged:

- Builds a strong student community that enhances students' sense of belonging and supports student retention and success.
- Creates meaningful and innovative interactions within the student community and between the student and staff community.
- Fosters a partnership with students in creating their own student community.
- Empowers students to shape their own learning experience.
- Innovates in advancing equality and diversity at their institution.

***Cal Courtney**, Director, Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success (pictured on the left) accepting the award from **Nicola Dandridge**, Chief Executive of the Office for Students, standing next to **Mark Leach**, the founder and Editor of Wonkhe (centre), with **Delon Jones**, Student President and **Nick Hillman**, Deputy Academic Principal (right).*

Provider Context

We deliver exclusively higher education programmes. In 2016-17 we had just under 1,300 full-time students and, following our January 2018 intake, we plan to have around the same number for 2017-18. When we first started up in 2002, we initially delivered Pearson HND programmes. Our last remaining HND programme (in business) is now being taught out with the remaining students (30) expected to have completed the programme during the current 2017-18 academic year. Our last recruitment to the HND Business was September 2015.

Since 2008, we have been delivering undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, the awarding bodies initially being the former University of Wales, Newport (now part of the University of South Wales) and Cardiff Metropolitan University. During 2012-13, we made a decision to change awarding bodies and, from September 2014, all our degrees have been awarded by the University of Northampton.

We currently deliver undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in business, law and accounting. All our undergraduate degrees are available full-time over 4 years (incorporating a Foundation Year), 3 years, 2 years (accelerated/intensive), and 1 year (Top-up, excluding law). Since September 2016, all the undergraduate degrees we deliver have been designed by us, and we are responsible for the setting and marking of assessments which are subject to moderation by External Examiners appointed by the University of Northampton. Previously (2014-16), we delivered the same undergraduate degrees that the University of Northampton delivered to its own students, and therefore our input into their design and assessment was negligible. We are also approved by the University of Northampton to deliver the MBA and LLM International Commercial Law.

Our Student Guild - grant-maintained by LSBM, but completely independent - was established in 2017. It is supported by a team of trained Peer Advisors who are employed by the Student Guild to provide a signposting service to their fellow students in addition to providing all the opportunities associated with a traditional Student Union. The Student Guild enrols all our students as Associate Members of the University of London's Student Central, thus ensuring they can enjoy the benefits of belonging to the wider Bloomsbury student population.

Our mission centres around 'building careers, transforming lives, and raising the aspirations of our students to become independent and critical learners, to achieve their full potential and to make valuable contributions to society'. We endeavour to achieve this by enhancing our learning and working environment through the application of Servant Leadership principles, which promote kindness, ethical rigour, creativity and accountability, alongside our 'strong strategic approach to enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, which is embedded in organisational structures and processes' [QAA Annual Monitoring Report 2017].

Our one year of TEF metrics should be read in the context of the distinctive nature of our student cohort i.e. they come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The contextual data for our TEF metrics shows that (for the reporting year) 89% of our students were aged over 21, 70%+ were BAME, 17% had a declared disability (for students with disabilities, our contribution to the benchmark was high at circa 18.7-26.2% for all metrics), 70%+ entered with non or low tariff qualifications, 78% were in EIMD 1 and 2, and 90% were local students. The 'mix' of our current students is similar:

> ***The School's data on student completion and achievement continues to reflect the demographic characteristics of the student body, with a very high proportion of mature students and students from a BME background, as well as an above sector average declaring a disability.***
>
> *- QAA Annual Monitoring Report, September 2017*

Widening access to students who may otherwise struggle to enter higher education and then supporting them to achieve their full potential is something that we plan for, implement and then evaluate as part of our overall commitment to social mobility, student wellbeing and success. The diverse nature of our academic community is valued as an important asset to the educational experience we provide. The insights and learning of our graduates, educated in the midst of this diversity, is, we recognise, one of the important contributions we can make to the wider society in which we live.

However, a strong commitment to, and engagement with, such a diverse student body brings challenges. Atherton (2017) states the following when explaining what it means to have a diverse student body:

> ***Universities have been actively trying to increase the diversity of their student body for some time. At one end of the scale lies Oxford, where it was recently revealed that one in three colleges failed to admit a single black student in 2015. At the other end are many institutions in London, which collectively educate the majority of BAME students. Enrolled in the city's universities are twice as many pupils who were eligible for free school meals as the next best-performing region, the highest number of mature students, and above-average participation by disabled students. But the capital's success has also contributed to one of its failures: it has the highest drop out rates in the country.***[1]

[1] https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2017/nov/03/lessons-from-london-what-it-means-to-have-a-diverse-student-body

Thomas, Gaskell and Johnson (2017) observe that identifying academic achievement is 'far more complex than school grades, with myriad individual, contextual and systemic factors playing their part' and suggest that we need to shift thinking from 'institution-as-gatekeeper to institution-as-enabler'.[2]

There is a clear message from our core TEF metrics (based upon the one year of data): the teaching quality and academic support we provide is of a high standard; however, the number of our students that progress and gain highly-skilled employment is below the benchmark. In this submission, we provide a narrative that explains this apparent dichotomy. We also explain the actions we have taken to support students to achieve their full potential (within their studies and upon graduation), and how these actions have been enhanced.

Teaching Quality

In October 2015, we had a very successful QAA Higher Education Review (HER). We achieved a **commendation** for the enhancement of student learning opportunities. The QAA highlighted the following features of **good practice:**

- The clear strategy and extensive support for improving teaching and learning.
- The wide range of effective support mechanisms that enable students to develop their academic and personal potential.
- The strong strategic approach to enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, which is embedded in the organisation structures and processes.
- The strong governance framework.
- The effective and full integration of the annual monitoring process into corporate governance and the annual resource planning cycle.

In the report from our September 2017 monitoring visit, the QAA noted that:

- The progress against the affirmation since the 2016 annual monitoring visit to improve the oversight of equality, diversity and inclusiveness within the school is commendable.
- The School has a comprehensive Annual Planning Cycle which informs the overall Academic Strategic Plan and results in an organisational Business and Improvement Plan (BIP).
- Annual programme monitoring within the School is well developed and rigorous.

Student Engagement (TQ1)

For academic year 2016-17, we moved to validated degrees for all our undergraduate provision. With this came the opportunity to 'tailor' our courses to better meet the needs of our students. Our students struggled with the University of Northampton franchised model, which we delivered in 2014-15 and 2015-16. The franchised degrees comprised six 20-credit long-thin modules, with at least two assessments per module, across each Level. The franchised Foundation Year (which we delivered for the first time in January 2016) comprised a mix of two long-thin modules at Level 0 and two long-thin modules at Level 4. In contrast, our validated degrees, including the Foundation Year, comprise four 30-credit short-fat modules, with two assessments per module. Importantly, we have also altered the type of teaching sessions. Under the franchised model students had lectures and seminars only; under our validated degrees students have lectures (active listening), seminars (discuss and develop) and workshops (apply and practise). Feedback from students on the new structure has been resoundingly positive:

> ***Seminar and workshop were helpful in the understanding of the topic plus the group work in class.***
>
> ***Nice seminar and workshop delivery; tutor interaction is good.***
>
> ***The seminar and workshop discussions really informed and developed my learning.***
>
> *- Student Module Evaluations, December 2017*

This change in structure was especially popular with our Foundation Year (FY) students. Under the franchised FY model, students had to complete the equivalent of circa 26,000 words of assessment, over 12 assessment items, studying a combination of Level 0 and Level 4 modules. Under the validated model, students complete circa 12,000 words over 8 assessment items, with students taking two 30-credit Level 0 modules each semester. Minutes from the February 2017 FY Course Committee meeting evidences the following feedback from Student Representatives (STARs), who had failed the franchised version of the course that started in January 2016:

2 http://wonkhe.com/blogs/widen-thinking-as-well-as-participation/

> *STARs who had experienced the FY course under the franchised degree model acknowledged the vast improvement to the structure of delivery under the new validated degree provision. This was particularly true in terms of organising their study load, as under the previous module structure, students found it confusing and difficult to study four modules in one semester.*
>
> *- FY Course Committee, February 2017*

Comments in the January 2017 intake Interim Course Evaluation questionnaires included:

> *Thank you. Compared to last year, this year is much easier to understand the topics and purpose of the study.*
>
> *Thank you for your support. I feel like I am the luckiest student to be in LSBM.*
>
> *- Interim Course Evaluations, January 2017*

Our NSS score for 'teaching on my course' is 93.3%, 7.3% above our benchmark, with the main contributors to this positive flag being mature students, BAME students, and students with disabilities. For NSS Question 1, 'Staff are good at explaining things' and for Question 4, 'My course has challenged me to achieve my best work', we scored 95%. Satisfaction rates of existing students are comparable. Our most recent student module evaluations, with 742 respondents, returned the following satisfaction percentages:

The aims and objectives of the module were clear:	*90.9%*
Tutors were good at explaining things:	*90.1%*
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the module:	*89.3%*

- Student Module Evaluations, December 2017

Valuing Teaching (TQ2)

> *Good practice in learning and teaching is identified in teaching observations and disseminated via the Teaching and Learning Forum. School targets include having all members of teaching staff as members of the Higher Education Academy to the minimum level of Fellow. The School Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) supports teaching staff in their development. An annual staff development conference provides a focus for staff development initiatives.*
>
> *Peer and managed observation processes for observing teaching are comprehensive. Records of teaching observations are detailed and supportive. The annual evaluation of peer observations provides examples for sharing good practice, and enhancing collegiate support and professional engagement. The managed observation scheme is clear, and the revised process shows that all observers undertake training in order to standardise observations. Management observers of teaching provided the review team with an example of how the School had effectively supported underperformance by a member of the teaching staff, an issue identified by the Student Academic Representative process.*
>
> *- QAA Higher Education Review Report, October 2015*

We became an institutional subscriber of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in May 2014, moving to strategic partner in 2016-17. It is one of our strategic goals that all academic staff (including sessionals) achieve, as a minimum, a Fellowship of the HEA. Since September 2014, we have supported 40 successful HEA Fellowship/Senior Fellowship applications. We have a further 5 staff who have submitted applications and who are awaiting decisions from the HEA; decisions are expected January and February 2018. Additionally, we have 11 applications in progress. Over 90% of our permanent and sessional academic staff have achieved Fellowship or Senior Fellowship of the HEA, and the remainder are working towards this.

We provide comprehensive support to staff with their HEA applications. The support is personalised (i.e. group and one-to-one sessions), unlimited, and covers all aspects of the Fellowships (i.e. materials provided, and all related costs of Fellowship).

In 2016-17, a group of four senior academic staff completed the HEA Leading Transformation in Learning and Teaching (LTLT) four-day training programme. A further 8 senior staff members will be attending the LTLT in March 2018. LTLT enables participants to enhance the skills, approaches and insights needed to lead course and programme teams

through processes of transformation and innovation. Run by the HEA in association with the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, LTLT is aimed at those with an interest in curriculum design and the transformation of learning and teaching within their institutions, faculties and departments.

Over the last 18 months we have systematically and strategically reduced the administrative burden on academic staff, thereby allowing them to focus fully on 'academic matters'. We have fully implemented an academic workload model, that is based upon 550 teaching hours per academic year, with allowances for specified activities and responsibilities.

All staff (i.e. academic and professional services) receive individual funding (£500 per year) for CPD, alongside additional Divisional/Departmental CPD budgets. This is to enable them to attend external staff development and training events. We convene an Annual Teaching and Learning Conference which all staff are encouraged to attend and participate in. We have Managed and Peer Observation Schemes and the 'findings' from these are discussed annually in forums convened by our Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Additional forums are held regularly to allow staff to reflect on their own experiences and explore the ideas and insights of other educationalists both within and beyond LSBM. These forums also reflect on identified themes extrapolated from student module evaluations which are used as the basis of discussion and reflection on teaching excellence.

In 2016-17, we reviewed our Recognition and Reward of Excellence in Teaching and Support of Learning scheme, and we increased the number of annual awards. At our 7th Annual Teaching and Learning Conference in July 2017, we presented the following staff awards:

- Tutor Contribution to Student Experience award [student nominated award].
- Professional Services Contribution to Student Experience award [student nominated award].
- LSBM Support and Enhancement award [staff application/nomination award] for outstanding work in supporting and enhancing learning.

Rigour and Stretch (TQ3)

> ***With the change from franchise to validated awards at undergraduate level, the School was able to have a lead involvement in the design and development of the awards, including the structure of assessment. In developing these programmes, the School makes explicit reference to the FHEQ, the applicable Subject Benchmark Statements, the Quality Code, and relevant professional body requirements including accounting professional organisations, the Solicitors Regulation Authority, the Bar Standards Board, and the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives.***
>
> *- QAA Annual Monitoring Report, September 2017*

> ***The structure of the course at LSBM really works for me. We regularly recap work which helps me with my learning. I have learnt a lot of skills in a short time. I can now type and know my way well around a computer and am a regular 'emailer'; before I came here I didn't know anything about computers. And my brain is being properly stimulated.***
>
> *- Mabel [BA (Hons) Business Management, Level 4]*

Our second Corporate Goal is:

> ***Provide our students with a transformational and high-quality educational experience within an inclusive academic community which promotes learning and personal development for all, and within which they will develop into independent and critical learners, achieve their full potential and make valuable contributions to society.***
>
> *- Corporate Plan 2017-20*

Our validated undergraduate degrees were designed with this goal in mind. The lecture, seminar, workshop delivery model encourages and engages students with the curriculum content and offers opportunities for linking theory to practice. Embedded throughout the curriculum is Personal Development Planning (PDP), meaning that PDP forms a part of specified modules across each Level. PDP is supported by subject specialist PDP Co-ordinators. PDP assists students to:

- Identify and achieve their career goals, and to develop skills that make them competitive for better jobs.
- Improve their key transferable skills competence, which will enable them to reach their full academic and employment potential.
- Develop them into a reflective and strategic learner and practitioner, a skill which will assist them throughout their personal life and career.

Of particular importance to me is the emphasis placed on employability and graduate outcomes. The Personal Development Planning process has allowed me to discern more clearly what it is I want to do when I graduate. By engaging in it, I have been able to see more clearly that I want to build a career in public sector management because it offers me an opportunity to combine my concern for social wellbeing with an avid interest in making systems work more effectively and efficiently.

- Endris Talani
[BA (Hons) Business Management, Foundation Year]

The University of Northampton Validation Panel that approved our validated LLB (Hons) Law and BA (Hons) Accounting and Financial Management programmes commended our approach to PDP:

LSBM was commended for the use of Personal Development Planning that uses student voice in the design.

- Validation Panel Report, April 2016

Embedded within the Foundation Year (FY), alongside PDP, is our Encourage Project. Encourage helps students to develop their critical thinking and self-reflection, and understand the values of classical education. It encourages our students to go beyond the narratives of the tabloids and certain blinkered politicians and instead see our Servant Leadership ethos as an invitation to re-imagine what the world can look like by critically engaging with it. The central tenets of Encourage are to:

- Celebrate critical thinking and reasoned enquiry.
- Encourage dialogue around social pluralism.
- Facilitate goal setting and personal development planning.

Feedback (TQ4)

Rigorous assessment practice has been maintained and the School uses its online system for students to submit assignments and receive feedback. The students the team met reported very positively about the quality and timeliness of assessment feedback. The change from franchise to validated relationship with the University at undergraduate degree level has enabled the School to influence the content and assessment processes for the new awards. The School has made changes to the assessment structure of the new Foundation Year programmes commencing September 2016 which has resulted in improved retention rates. The School actively engaged and consulted with the student body on the review and changes to assessment practice.

- QAA Annual Monitoring Report, September 2017

Our overall NSS score for 'assessment and feedback' is 82.5%, 5.2% above benchmark; for our law students it is 87.5%; and for our HND students it is 89.7%. 84% of our students affirmed that they received helpful comments on their work.

Qualitative comments from our most recent student module evaluations include:

My seminar tutor was really helpful. I learned a lot from the way she taught, and she provided excellent feedback with my assignment.

Tutors are helpful and give their all to help us when it concerns assignments.

- Student Module Evaluations, December 2017

The provision of effective and timely feed-forward (i.e. formative feedback) and summative feedback is a key component of our Academic Strategic Plan.

Several types of feed-forward and feedback are provided at various times during the assessment process. Prior to completing an assessment, feed-forward is provided on a sample of written work. Once an assessment is completed, summative feedback is provided. If a student fails to pass the assessment, this feedback will additionally act as feed-forward for the resubmission or resit.

There are clear guidelines on the level of feed-forward that can be provided on draft work. This is offered to help students target their study activities and develop their ideas. In the context of students' development through the stages of their studies, the detail and extent of pre-submission feed-forward reduces as they progress.

The timeliness and quality of feed-forward and feedback is monitored through our Student Module Evaluation Questionnaires and our Course Committee meetings, at which feedback is now a standing agenda item.

Until 2016-17, External Examiner scrutiny of our assessments and feedback was carried out by University of Northampton Externals who were also responsible for assessments and feedback for the University's on-campus students. From 2016-17, when we started to deliver validated undergraduate degrees, this was changed so that our current External Examiners look exclusively at our assessments and feedback. As a result, we have received much more comprehensive qualitative feedback on our assessments, feedback and related procedures. Comments for 2016-17 included:

> ***I would like to single out the quality of students' coursework at the top end for commendation. Some of the research and presentation were of very high standard, and it was particularly pleasing to see students aiming for such a high standard of research at this level of their academic studies. Some of the coursework submissions were comparable to performance at postgraduate level.***
>
> *- Law External Examiner*

> ***There is evidence of innovation in the assessments that I have observed. A key part of this is the contemporary nature of the briefs. Examples include relating the tasks and case studies to Brexit, global economy, and other topical issues. This is an indication of good practice and maintaining this approach is highly recommended to give students the opportunity to apply ongoing issues in the global business environment in their learning activities.***
>
> *- Business Management External Examiner*

> ***The assessments across the programme are extremely current and relevant. During the assessment process I commented a number of times that I expected students to ENJOY the exploration of the business areas in question. The levels that students were expected to meet absolutely reflected current undergraduate business and management benchmarks.***
>
> *- Business Management External Examiner*

Our accounting and law programmes have been mapped against relevant professional body requirements [ACCC, CIMA, SRA, Bar Standards Board, CILEx] and many assessments on these programmes serve a dual function of gaining credits towards the degree and also gaining professional body exemptions. As such, these assessments are highly 'employability skills' focussed.

Learning Environment

Our NSS TEF metrics for academic support indicate an 84.5% satisfaction rating, which is 4.0% above benchmark, whereas our continuation data is 8.1% below benchmark. Our continuation data covers a time that included primarily HND students, together with students on the newly franchised University of Northampton 3-year and 2-year LLB (Hons) Law and BA (Hons) Business and Management degrees, which we started to deliver in September 2014. The LLB was only designated for funding through the Student Loans Company two months prior to its start date, and the majority of students were admitted with non-standard qualifications. With regards to the HND, in 2015 we made the strategic decision to teach it out and replace it with 4-year degrees that incorporated a Foundation Year. The last recruitment to the HND was in September 2015. Additionally, as stated above, during 2015 we concluded that the method of delivery for our franchised degrees was not appropriate for our students, being overly heavy on assessment, and comprising 6 long-thin 20-credit modules at each Level, with the Foundation Year comprising a mix of Level 0 and Level 4 modules. From September 2016, we therefore started the delivery of validated undergraduate degrees that we had designed.

With regards to the HND, throughout its delivery we have provided an additional, and compulsory, Student Development Module. This module was designed to develop students' academic study skills, the aim being to support students to reach their full potential, and to increase continuation and achievement rates. This module was complemented by weekly tutorials convened by Course Leaders. The effectiveness of this module and the weekly tutorials was recognised as a **good practice** by the QAA during our Review for Educational Oversight in 2013:

> ***A compulsory student development module provides effective support to students in the early development of academic core skills. This encourages independent learning and critical thought, developing personal and professional skills through a range of elective topics. Students are assigned to groups following diagnostic testing. Course leaders hold weekly tutorials to provide course-specific academic support and, if required, arrange meetings with individual students. The support provided by the student development module and the course leader tutorial is good practice.***
>
> *- QAA Review for Educational Oversight Report, June 2013*

During 2014 we established a new Centre for Academic Skills and Enhancement (CASE) through which all students could obtain one-to-one academic skills and English language support. CASE also delivered a series of themed lectures related to academic skills and English language development that were made available to all students.

During the same year, we also established the Student Success Unit, based within the Registry. A large focus of the Unit's initial work was on gathering intelligence to underpin a more robust and strategic approach to the issues of student retention, progression and achievement.

In December 2014, the Student Success Unit became a separate Division, the Student Admissions and Success (SAS) Division. The SAS Division developed a Student Success Strategy that set out our approach for promoting retention and success in all aspects of college life, being based on a student-centred approach. The building up of a partnership-focused student community formed a key element of this strategy and this student partnership style has greatly augmented and reinforced the work of our staff. The SAS Division subsequently became the Student Engagement and Success (SES) Division after it was decided to move the admissions function to Registry.

For the March 2015 intake of the HND, we introduced a pilot 6-day pre-sessional academic skills course. This was identified as being a "resounding success" [Academic Report to the May 2015 meeting of the Senior Management and Leadership Team]. Following this pilot, the Academic Committee, at its meeting on 9 July 2015, decided that for the September 2015 intake of the HND, this pre-sessional academic skills course would be compulsory for any student who was admitted to the HND without a Level 3 qualification. At the same meeting, the Academic Committee decided that there should be no further intakes of the HND after September 2015, and approved its replacement with 4-year degrees that incorporated a Foundation Year.

While recognising the HND as not being the most appropriate course for our students, we developed a learning environment to support all our students to achieve.

Our learning environment was recognised as a good practice by the QAA during our Higher Education Review in October 2015 (where we were also **commended** for the enhancement of student learning opportunities):

> ***The review team considers the wide range of effective support mechanisms that enable students to develop their academic and personal potential to be good practice.***
>
> *- QAA Higher Education Review Report, October 2015*

We have continued to develop and enhance our learning environment.

For example, in September 2015 we introduced our Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) scheme. PALs are an invaluable source of support for students. PALs themselves benefit through acquiring transferable skills and a valuable addition to their CV. In addition, participation in the global PAL community has led to strong collegial bonds with universities around the world and our students have opportunities each year to attend conferences and training events in the UK and further afield.

From January 2016, we introduced DigiPALs (student Digital Peer Assisted Learning), to provide students with support during the induction and development

sessions organised by the Learning Technology Team. Support provided by our Learning Technology Team (and the DigiPALs) includes responding to email queries, Week 1 Digital Essentials sessions (embedded in the curriculum), one-to-one sessions, visits to classrooms for additional support, and Digi Skills sessions, which run weekly and are open to both staff and students. Qualitative feedback on the sessions includes:

- The knowledge I gained on digital skills will help me through my course and in my career.
- 21st century being the digital one. It is a slow process for some of us. Session extremely needed.
- Very effective teaching which will go a long way in helping in my studies. Thanks.

Our 'holistic' approach to the provision of academic skills support prompted a discussion in our Senior Management and Leadership Team (SMLT) about where CASE support should sit within our structure. The common ground shared by CASE and the Student Engagement and Success (SES) Division required us to think about how both could work more closely. In March 2017, the decision was made to merge CASE and SES into a new Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success (SEWS).

During 2017, participation in the HEA's London Retention Project brought SEWS staff and our students into contact with other professionals working in the areas of retention and success; we were the only alternative provider to participate in this project. It was through this project that the idea of our Peer Advice Service was formed; this service is separate to the PALs scheme. Academic development and support is now offered alongside other services, recognising the intersectionality of the problems which students sometimes face. More resources are now aimed at monitoring attendance and making interventions where and when appropriate. As stated above, in November 2017 we received the 'Independent Higher Education Award for Excellence in Student Community', recognising the success of this approach.

Resources (LE1)

> ***Well presented, clearly defined resources representing topics/parts of the module, making it easy for the students to find and use resources.***
>
> *- Law External Examiner*

> ***The integral use of the virtual learning environment within the programme provides a genuine centre to the students' study. As an external examiner, it is a pleasure to be offered a much greater insight into the community studying business and management at LSBM. The use of external speakers, and the concentration upon real world issues and business problems enhances the experience for the students at this key stage of their development.***
>
> *- Business Management External Examiner*

Our agreement with Birkbeck College (University of London) is now in its ninth year and continues to provide us with a unique position in the alternative HE provider sector. The vast majority of our teaching takes place within Birkbeck College and our students have access to Birkbeck College's library (including borrowing rights).

To coincide with the start of our delivery of validated undergraduate degrees in September 2016 we invested in a new VLE: Canvas. We could have continued to use the University of Northampton's BlackBoard VLE, but, having undertaken a review of the major VLEs, we decided to opt for Canvas. Canvas is more user friendly for both staff and students, and provides our students with 24-hour help desk support.

All students are provided with a hard copy of their Course Handbook. We provide all our non-Foundation Year students with one downloadable eBook for each module (with very limited exceptions). The eBooks are accessed through the student's VitalSource account and can be accessed through various platforms and devices. As well as initial inductions, there are support tutorials and presentations available to help students in the use of the services and tools from VitalSource, including instruction in how to annotate eBooks through VitalSource. Foundation Year students are provided with hard copy Study Booklets in Semester 1 and then one eBook in Semester 2. All our students have access to the University of Northampton's online library, and a 40-seater open-access computer lab is available for students to use in our premises at 99 Gower Street.

We are an institutional subscriber to HSTalks, a web-based series of lectures, case studies, and activities that provide 'real life' accounts of business and accounting topics. We also have institutional membership of Chartered Management Institute's ManagementDirect, an online resource centre

providing key practical and theoretical resources in management and leadership. Resources include 100+ hours of e-learning modules, 400+ videos, 12,000+ journal articles, and 700+ eBooks.

Our accounting students have access (through membership paid by us) to ACCA and CIMA resources which contain articles, webinars, past exam papers, job postings (graduate and internship), learning from blogs, and discussion forums. The membership connects our students with both national and international accounting students, qualified accountants and employers globally.

Research skills are embedded in the curriculum from Foundation Year onwards, culminating in the Level 6 major project module, with research input sessions and workshops. As part of this module students are invited to train in the use of SPSS statistics package, for which we have the software loaded onto all the computers in our two computer labs.

Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice (LE2)

> ***The School aims to support research and scholarship by staff and students to underpin excellence in teaching and high student achievement. A programme of skills development sessions and financial allocations to staff for external development complete the comprehensive approach to supporting teaching and learning.***
>
> *- QAA Higher Education Review Report, October 2015*

> ***The School has a detailed Research Strategy which is informed by the REF Assessment Framework and Guidance, and supported by the Academic Committee. The information provided clearly shows that this area of good practice has been maintained and enhanced through staff being supported to engage in research activity, observations, support materials for staff, seminars and conferences, and through student engagement to share practice.***
>
> *- QAA Annual Monitoring Report, September 2017*

Our Academic Strategic Plan covers scholarship and we have a stand-alone Research Strategy. All academic staff are required to engage in scholarship. Goal 3 of the Academic Strategic Plan 2017-20 is to:

> ***Develop, support and empower our staff to achieve excellence in teaching.***
>
> *- Academic Strategic Plan 2017-20*

We provide extensive support for the continuing professional development (CPD) of all our staff. As detailed above, all academic staff are supported to become Fellows or Senior Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Our confidential Peer Observation of Teaching Scheme and the Managed Observation of Teaching Scheme, both aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), are key components of the Academic Strategic Plan 2017-20.

Our Research Strategy 2017-20, articulates how we: develop, support and empower all our staff to achieve excellence in research that will be of direct relevance to the needs of academia, higher education, commerce, industry, and the public and voluntary sectors, in addition to ourselves; and, design and deliver courses that are informed by research, and through which we will develop and empower students to engage in their own research. Our commitment to research-informed teaching is demonstrated by:

- Our Research Forum that fosters a supportive environment for research.
- Our workload model that provides an allowance of up to 165 teaching hours (495 working hours) for research.
- An annual CPD allowance of £500 for each member of staff, plus an additional annual allowance of £1,000 for research-active staff.
- Research Seminar and Working Paper series.
- Research Methods training workshops for research-active staff to equip, develop, and enable new and early career researchers to actualise their research aspirations and, for academic staff researchers, to translate these into their teaching.
- Supporting new researchers to develop research activities ‘around their students’ with outputs geared towards enhancing their teaching practices. Examples of such include:
  - Embedding employability skills in the BA (Hons) Accounting and Financial Management via use of PSRB services.
  - Development of a philosophy and practice of Servant Leadership through service opportunity.

- Effectiveness of Self-Regulated Formative Feedback in Enhancing Students' Learning Experience in Higher Education.

We encourage our students to present at our Research Seminar series and support students in joining us in presentations to showcase our and their achievements. For example, our Student President presented on *Setting up a Student Guild* at the IHE Annual Conference 2017, and four of our accounting students presented on *Acquisition of 21st Century Accounting Employability Skills via CIMA Business Game* at our 7th Annual Teaching and Learning Conference, July 2017. This was a joint presentation carried out with CIMA, academic staff and our students.

Personalised Learning (LE3)

> ***Effective teaching and learning and highly positive outcomes reflect the effective support mechanisms that enable students to develop their academic and personal potential and provide a seamless learning experience.***
>
> *- QAA Annual Monitoring Report, September 2016*

> ***The School has extended the wide range of effective support mechanisms, which are led and coordinated through the Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success, that enable students to develop their academic and personal potential. This includes the full implementation of the Peer Assisted Learning mentor scheme and the Peer Adviser scheme which ensures at least five Peer Advisers are available at all times on campus. These enhancements have been further expanded for the 2017-18 academic year, and students the team met reported very positively on the changes and valued highly the training given to them to enable them to support other students at the School.***
>
> *- QAA Annual Monitoring Report, September 2017*

Our students are multi-dimensional and multi-facetted individuals whose educational ambitions are linked to aspirations in other areas of their lives, such as employment prospects, greater financial stability or living a life that utilises their innate talents and aptitudes more fully. Frequently, students present with only vague notions of what their goals are in life and an important aspect of our work is to help students identify and articulate the direction they wish to follow and then support them as they undertake this journey. For each student this journey is different, so our provision must on the one hand be individually based, but on the other hand be scalable and applicable to a large group of people. Crucial to the success of the student journey is linking the students' wider aspirations to the academic demands and content of their courses. This was one of the reasons that the Centre for Academic Skills and Enhancement (CASE) merged with the Student Engagement and Success Division (SES) in 2017 to form the Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success (SEWS).

SEWS works hard to realise our mission to transform our students' lives in order that they might achieve their full potential. This mission is deeply connected to our promotion of kindness, ethical rigour, creativity and accountability as core values within our community of learning. Conscious of these demands SEWS seeks to deliver a range of services which place the holistic development of our students at the heart of what we do. By recognising the multi-dimensional nature of the individuals we deal with, our services aim to ensure that each student becomes an independent and critical learner, constantly encouraged to achieve their full potential and contribute to the society in which we live.

Helping our students to find their individualised paths through the HE landscape starts at their induction, in which the key message is that we are a mixed and diverse academic community and students will need, with our support, to find 'their calling' while studying with us. Our Student Guide to Induction states that:

> ***Induction is a programme of events and resources which have been put together by staff and the Student Guild to ensure all new and returning students have the information they need to succeed on their chosen course of study. The underlying philosophy of the education LSBM offers is that knowledge cannot be simply handed to someone; students have to take charge of their own learning and develop their own knowledge. Induction is here to help you take charge. It's here to guarantee that students do not feel they have to struggle on their own. Induction will give you a sense of connection to the academic community that is LSBM, and it will give you a "can-do" attitude, a sense that you can be a successful scholar, a belief in your own power to determine the future direction of your life.***
>
> *- Student Guide to Induction*

SEWS provides students with support, both academic and pastoral. Academic support is offered through StudyPlus, which provides all of our students with free support, guidance and tuition in all areas of academic skills and English language. The service is aimed at improving academic performance, regardless of existing level: good students who want to be excellent ones are catered for equally with struggling students who want to achieve a pass level result. StudyPlus tutors are available to offer one-to-one support in addition to small group workshops offered each week; from January 2018, sessions are also being provided virtually through our VLE. StudyPlus also delivers workshops aimed at specific items of assessment such as creating research proposals and writing business reports.

Our full-time SEWS Disability and Wellbeing Advisor supports our students (circa 20%) with disabilities, long-term health conditions and specific learning difficulties. The support offered ranges from helping them to settle into study, motivating them, assisting with special exam arrangements and liaising with tutors to ensure that students' needs are understood and met. Students regularly attribute their success and high level of engagement to the care and determination of the Disability and Wellbeing Advisor. A current student testimonial states that the 'Disability and Wellbeing Advisor was an inspiration: when things were tough with my illness, she kept me going' [Mabel, BA (Hons) Business Management], and a graduate testimonial states:

I had to apply for DSA (Disabled Students Allowance) and the LSBM Disability and Wellbeing Advisor was the best; she was there, making sure I got all the bursaries and other support I could get. It just made it a lot easier knowing that I had those people looking out for me. The non-academic staff at LSBM were really helpful.

- Beth Alexandre
[BA (Hons) Business Management graduate]

One of the headline successes of 2016-17 was our Peer Advisor scheme. The Peer Advisors provide a signposting service to students, dealing with student questions and directing students to where the appropriate help is available. They assist, in particular, new students as they navigate their way through a variety of transitions including acclimatisation to academic life, timetable changes, proper use of ID cards, and using the online library service. Peer Advisors also provide one-to-one guidance on the use of our VLE, student email accounts and our Student Self-service Portal.

The Peer Advisors are based in the Student Guild premises and in addition to the support and direction they give students, they also play an important role in cultivating a sense of belonging to LSBM amongst the student body by encouraging them to join student societies and attend the many events which both the Student Guild and ourselves run during the year.

Our Personal Advice Network, that replaced our Personal Academic Tutoring scheme in 2017-18, is one of the ways students get the advice they need in order to make the most of their time with us. It is staffed by our Success Champions (academic and professional services staff) who help students resolve any issues they might have during their time here. Success Champions are easy to contact through our website and if they cannot resolve a student's issue, they refer them to the appropriate staff who can.

As discussed above, through our Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) scheme, we are part of a global network of higher education institutions which support the role of peers (i.e. fellow students) in augmenting the learning experience of their students. Our staff are accredited facilitators of Peer Assisted Supplementary Study (accredited by the National PASS Centre at the University of Manchester) and they train experienced students to lead study sessions for students who are encountering course material for the first time. These study sessions are offered in addition to regular classes and are focused on helping students to master the material they study during lectures, seminars and workshops.

Student Outcomes and Learning Gain

Our one reportable year of DLHE TEF metrics only covered our Top-up degrees (business and computing) and HND. Although the aggregated data indicates we are below the benchmark, we have a positive flag for our HND students who entered highly skilled employment or further study within 6 months of graduation. The majority of the Top-up students had

joined from a HND course. As discussed above, we have since replaced the HND with 4-year degrees that incorporate a Foundation Year. This provides students with an additional year to develop the employability features that have been in-built into our validated degrees (through Personal Development Planning (PDP). Our validated degrees, with their embedded PSRB exemptions, will also result in our students being more employable. The Top-up degrees will subsequently be discontinued once the HND has been fully taught out.

As stated above, the University of Northampton Validation Panel that approved our validated LLB (Hons) Law and BA (Hons) Accounting and Financial Management programmes commended our approach to PDP:

> ***LSBM was commended for the use of Personal Development Planning that uses student voice in the design.***
>
> *- Validation Panel Report, April 2016*

As set out in our Employability and Enterprise Strategy, PDP is a core component of student success. The PDP template is introduced to students during induction and is used subsequently to set employability goals, highlight obstacles and determine ways of overcoming them. We link PDP with a wider philosophical discussion on the notions of calling and meaning, basing much of this discussion on the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus and his idea that *ethos andropoi daimon*, our character is our calling. In this way, we work to ensure that students understand employability in the wider context of a life that has meaning for themselves and for the society and communities in which they live.

PDP workshops are delivered during timetabled sessions with each cohort throughout the year.

All materials, links and related documents to the PDP programme are posted on students' VLE course sites, where additional PDP related workshops and events are also promoted.

We address the social capital deficit experienced by many of our students by forging relationships with individuals and bodies from outside LSBM. During 2016-17, we held a series of external speaker talks. During 2017-18 we have introduced the LSBM Lighthouse project, a series of events aimed at building the capacity of our students to be successful in the contemporary work environment.

The Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success (SEWS) provides all students with the opportunity to gain experience of working creatively in small teams, addressing issues which are likely to feature in their life as a graduate employee. In March 2017, we ran the first of our boardroom workshops, bringing together aspiring entrepreneurs for a step-by-step course on how to open an online shop.

Employment and Further Study (S01)

> ***I graduated in April 2017. I've got a good job at Capita and things are just going from strength to strength. I was able to work as well while I was studying, which was really important and LSBM were very supportive while I was doing that.***
>
> *- Beth [BA (Hons) Business Management graduate]*

> ***When I graduate I want to 'be there' for disabled people to tell them that they can do it; like the staff at LSBM told me I could. They should not be afraid of taking that step. I want to be a motivational, inspirational speaker for disabled people.***
>
> *- Mabel [BA (Hons) Business Management, Level 4]*

> ***The London School of Business and Management has been the link between my business idea and its success. It's a great community that empowers and equips you to face the world! My academic achievement at LSBM has enabled me to develop curriculum and teach business skills to Creative Craft learners at Adult Learning Lewisham. This has created the forum for others to enjoy the prospects of linking their creativity to intended entrepreneurial dreams and opportunities.***
>
> *- Shola Fiberesima*
> *[LSBM graduate and Student Guild Manager]*

As discussed above, students develop their plans for employment and/or further study through our embedded Personal Development Planning (PDP).

We run regular employability focussed talks and discussions. In 2017-18, these are being delivered through our Lighthouse project.

We also run themed events to further develop students' employability and transferable skills. For example, in November 2017, we hosted the fourth annual Social Storm event, which brought together 160 students from 11 universities across Europe to tackle 2 global societal challenges in 24 hours. Students worked in multinational teams and collaborated for 24 hours to design, research and pitch solutions to two Sustainable Development Goals: combating climate change and building sustainable cities. We were proud to play host to over 40 of them, including our own students. This year's winning team designed a crypto currency platform, to enable people to exchange low level support and services with their neighbours, to create inclusive local communities.

Effective communication is a cornerstone of business and life, and success for both employees and entrepreneurs increasingly depends on the ability to present ideas effectively. In order to achieve this, students must be equipped with the understanding and skills they will need when they leave education. Introduced in 2017, our Effective Communication for Work and Life is a 5-week programme that develops an understanding of the principles of effective presenting and equips students with the techniques they need to communicate effectively in a range of different settings. Using a project-based, peer learning approach, weekly sessions cover: pitching, negotiation, debating and the art of conversation, and mooting.

This academic year, we are setting up a Law Clinic, which will involve our students being trained to provide legal advice to the general public (under supervision).

Employability and Transferable Skills (SO2)

As mentioned above, Personal Development Planning (PDP) is embedded in all our validated degrees.

We have an internship module on all our undergraduate degrees. Through the optional internship module, we support students to develop and enhance student employability through gaining a practical understanding of the culture and structure of a working environment.

Our validated degrees were designed with professional practice in mind. Our BA (Hons) Accounting and Financial Management (AFM) includes maximum permitted exemptions for all nine ACCA Knowledge and Skills Modules, and seven CIMA exemptions. Additionally, all AFM students are provided with ACCA and CIMA membership (fully funded by LSBM) throughout their studies. This membership entitlement only started in 2016-17 so we are only now starting to understand the benefits it brings to the students. Our AFM Course Leader has written a research article to measure the impact of this membership. The article is entitled *Enhancing Students' Employability Skills via use of the Association of Chartered and Certified Accountants Student Membership.* Headline findings include:

- 92% of students accessed the ACCA Graduate magazine
- 97% of students accessed ACCA for Graduates (with 100% Level 5 and 6 students using it)
- 92% of students accessed the ACCA Careers Service
- 92% of students accessed the ACCA Study Resource

Our LLB is a qualifying law degree (for students intending to qualify as a solicitor or barrister) and is recognised by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, Bar Standards Board and the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx); this is fully funded by LSBM. Upon completion of two Level 6 CILEx-accredited modules, students can be admitted as a Graduate Member of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (CILEx). As a Graduate Member of CILEx, students are entitled to use the designated letters GCILEx after their name. Upon graduation, Graduate Members of CILEx could immediately work in a law firm in roles such as a Trainee CILEx Lawyer, Paralegal or Legal Clerk.

Our Foundation Year has been designed with a strong focus on students acquiring knowledge, skills and attributes that are valued by employers and that enhance their personal and/or professional lives. The first semester focuses on academic skills (with an emphasis on critical thinking), digital literacy, and learning about and discussing contemporary world issues.

The second semester Professional Skills module focusses on skills that students will require in their further studies and subsequent employment. The areas covered include numeracy, digital literacy, written and spoken interaction in a professional context, reflection on performance, exploring the

complexity of work interactions, dealing with work related conflict and challenges, and client care. The module employs a particularly wide range of learning activities and resources. Students not only use an academic course book and articles, but also resources produced by external bodies (e.g. ACAS) and inspirational and influential entrepreneurs. As the focus of the module is to develop skills, the approach taken is very practical: it involves classes in computer labs to develop students' digital skills (MS Excel, business correspondence), group projects developing team-working skills, role play (e.g. negotiating terms of a contract) and consideration of authentic workplace scenarios (e.g. managing challenging conversations). The classes on stress and time management, which introduced our students to a range of life-long tools, were particularly popular with the students. The 2016-17 delivery of this module achieved a 100% satisfaction rate in the module evaluation.

Positive Outcomes for All (SO3)

As discussed above, many of our students come from disadvantaged backgrounds or are at greater risk of not achieving positive outcomes, and we welcome such diversity within our academic community, and the huge range of experience and perspective that this brings. As such, it was reassuring that our HND DLHE TEF metrics for those entering highly-skilled employment or further study gained a positive flag with a significant positive difference of 11.5%.

Our embracing of diversity is affirmed within our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and evidenced by our commitment to training in this area, the development and implementation of an inclusive learning environment and the creation of a very proactive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team with a broad representation from both staff and students. An appreciation of diversity and the equitable treatment of all are among our core values, underpinning our success as a community of scholars and servant leaders.

We are a Senior Stonewall Diversity Champion, the UK's leading best-practice employers' forum for issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity equality, diversity and inclusion. We are also recognised as a Disability Confident Employer (having progressed from Disability Confident Committed Employer status) under the government's Disability Confident scheme, which promotes fair, equitable and just practices in the recruitment and retention of staff who live with disabilities or long-term medical conditions. A testimony to our commitment to equality is evident in our Staff Recruitment and Development Policy and the provision it makes for job applicants with a declared disability to be guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential requirements for any post. The same level of commitment is also evident in our approach to students and potential students.

As recognised by the QAA:

> ***The progress against the affirmation since the 2016 annual monitoring visit to improve the oversight of equality, diversity and inclusiveness within the school is commendable. Progress has been made to review School policies for impact assessment on equality and diversity issues, and compulsory online and face-to-face training has been introduced for all staff. Guaranteed interviews are available for disabled job applicants and newly devised modules on the Foundation Year have embedded equality and diversity within the curriculum. All staff are required to be aware of the School's Unconscious Bias Guidance, and whenever there is a Panel meeting, for example, Disciplinary or Academic Misconduct, all Panel members are required to re-read the document.***
>
> *- QAA Annual Monitoring Report, September 2017*