



Institutional Report:

European Business School London Regent's College Inner Circle Regent's Park London NW1 4NS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The European Business School London (EBS-L) was established in 1979. The School originally occupied premises within City University, but moved to Regent's College (the former Bedford College premises) in 1987. EBS-L was awarded accreditation by BAC in 1995 and most recently re-inspected in February 2001.
- 1.2 At the end of December 2005, EBS-L transferred its assets, liabilities and undertakings to Regent's College, itself a charity. The Director of EBS-L had himself been acting as the Interim Chief Executive of Regent's College between February and December 2005, with a new Chief Executive taking up his post in January 2006. The merger between EBS-L and Regent's College will not change the actual running of the School, and the EBS-L Academic Board will remain responsible for the academic programmes and related aspects of the School's provision. However, in the longer term there is the prospect that Regent's College may itself become a degree-awarding body.
- 1.3 In 1991 EBS-L became the first independent business school to be awarded associate status by CNAAB, allowing it to offer a CNAAB BA(Hons) in European Business Administration. After the demise of CNAAB, EBS applied successfully to the Open University Validation Service (OUVS) and was awarded institutional accreditation May 1993. The School is due for revalidation in October 2006.
- 1.4 At the time of the last inspection, the School's academic programme comprised four Bachelor's degrees with a duration of 3.5 or four years. The programme has now been significantly expanded and restructured.
- 1.5 At pre-degree and undergraduate levels there are now three programmes:

Business Foundation Course (internal award); one or two semesters
BA (Hons) in Business and Management Studies(OUVS); 3 years
BA (Hons) in International Business (OUVS); 3.5 years including a Study
Period Abroad (SPA) in one of over 60 partner institutions in 20 different
countries.

Both bachelor's degrees offer majors in Economics, Entrepreneurship (Management), Finance, Human Resource Management, Law, Management or Marketing. There are optional language components in the Business Management degree and compulsory language components in the International Business degree. Internships (24-30 weeks' work experience in the Business Management degree and 36 weeks in the International Business degree) are an integral part of the programmes.

1.6 At post-graduate level there are also three programmes:

- MSc in Global Banking (OUVS); 1 year
- MA in Entrepreneurial Management (OUVS); 1 year
- MBA in International Business (OUVS); 1 year

Students may opt for an articulated Bachelors-Masters programme, which they can complete in four and a half years.

1.7 There were 846 students enrolled at the time of the inspection, compared with 650 in 2001. 56% were from EU countries other than UK, 13% from other European countries, 9% from CIS, 8% from UK, 5% from Asia and 2% from Latin America.

1.8 In the light of EBS's institutional accreditation by OUVS, it was determined, as in 1995 and 2001, to restrict the inspection to a one-day visit by BAC's Chief Executive. Meetings were held with the Chief Executive of Regent's College, and EBS staff, including the Dean and the Heads of Quality Assurance, Learning Teaching and Research, Student Support, and Careers and Placement, the Course Leaders for the BAIB, MA and MSc programmes, the Admissions Officer and a senior teacher from the Foundation Programme.

2. Detailed Observations

2.1 Premises and Health and Safety

2.1.1 Regent's College occupies the former Bedford College premises, set in its own attractive grounds within Regent's Park. EBS-L students have full access to the general provision of the College, including the well equipped Tate Library, an Information Technology Centre, an internet café, a large refectory, sports and social facilities (including a Student Centre) and residential accommodation in Reid Hall and Oliver Hall. EBS-L itself occupies most of the Tuke wing at the rear of the main building, an area which includes Tuke Hall, a large auditorium and conference centre.

2.1.2 Given BAC's familiarity with Regent's College from previous inspections of both EBS-L and Regent's Business School, the inspection focussed upon new areas of development since the last inspection.

2.1.3 Additions to the EBS-L provision:

- EBS-L has recently installed a Learning Resources Centre, with the main function of encouraging independent learning of foreign languages. It includes a study area with 12 PC workstations linked to a server holding a battery of computer-based language learning materials as well as a library of CD-ROMs, DVDs, VCDs, magazines and tapes. There are 14 additional workstations linked to the language archive in the library area. The College is developing a virtual learning environment (Moodle) for wider use by students, which can be accessed from students outside the College. Students also have access to live broadcasts from mainland Europe, China, Japan and Russia, as well as BBC, ITV, CNN and Bloomberg (22 channels in all). It is planned to develop a second IT suite for teaching purposes.
- A major innovation within the EBS-L curriculum is the LCP Experience (Learning, Creative Management and Psychology and Drama) which seeks to merge "arts and management into one entity" by involving business students in projects which include film, drama, fashion and art. To support this, a multimedia studio and editing suite,

equipped with excellent up-to-date technology, has been established near the Learning Resources Centre by the School's Media Services Department.

- A new post-graduate area has been established, with teaching rooms, a computer suite and a student common room. Classrooms are equipped with data projection and interactive whiteboards. The standard of furnishing is excellent.
- The student administration area has been reorganised as the Centre for Student and Programme Administration, a large open plan office, with a reception desk.
- A large lecture room for the undergraduate programmes has been refurbished and equipped with fixed electronic projection equipment. Every classroom has as a minimum an OHP, white board and television monitor. The general standard of furnishing is high.

2.1.4 Amongst College-wide developments there has been extensive upgrading of the Information Technology Centre, with all PCs replaced in the last three years. There is now extensive wireless networking. There are ten IT suites, with more than 200 computers in all.

2.1.5 Shared study facilities in the Tate library are excellent. In addition to very reasonable bookstock and journals, students have online access to the Athens database, as well as real-time marketing and financial information. There is also access to the library of the University of Westminster. The library provides a very pleasant environment for quiet study.

2.1.6 Health and Safety within Regent's College is the responsibility of the Council of Management, through the Chief Executive. The College Facilities Manager has immediate managerial responsibility, with local responsibility for the induction of staff and good housekeeping devolved to the tenants and departments within the College. There is an extensive and informative Health and Safety Policy. A copy of the Fire Certificate and evidence of inspection of the kitchens by the local Environmental Health Department were provided. Regent's College is a member of the British Safety Council and so "committed to working towards Health, Safety and Environmental Best Practice".

2.1.7 Overall, the premises and resources were considered to be excellent.

2.2 Administration and Staffing

2.2.1 It was too early to assess what changes would follow from the incorporation of EBS-L within the legal entity of Regent's College. In the short term it will probably make no practical difference to the management of EBS-L, but were Regent's College to be successful in gaining recognition as an independent degree awarding body there would clearly be a requirement to develop overarching structures to monitor the educational standards across all of the constituent members, which include four other independent higher education institutions.

2.2.2 The Dean was the Academic Director of EBS-L at the time of BAC's last inspection in 2001, becoming Director in 2003. He had previously held senior academic positions at the University of West England and the University of Bath. Since 2003, he has been responsible for (amongst other developments) an extensive restructuring of the management, the successful development of the Masters programmes,

- establishing a research base within the School and introducing a scheme of staff appraisal. He is the head of an extended management structure.
- 2.2.3 Academic management is structured to provide both discrete operational control of each of the degree programmes and to allow for sharing of expertise and the transfer of good practice across the academic provision. Course leaders are responsible for the management of individual degree programmes, while Subject Leaders are responsible for the delivery of specific areas common to all of the programmes. This has proved to be a valuable basis for development – staff pointed to the successful validation and introduction of the MBA programme as an example. There is also a strong awareness of the need to direct teaching and learning on all programmes towards a generic outcome of “graduateness”, and it is accordingly essential that there should be an ethos which encompasses the whole EBS-L academic spectrum. All of the academic staff come under the management of the Head of the Academic Group.
- 2.2.4 There are 22 full-time and more than 50 part-time academic staff. There is a good balance between recent appointments (around 20 in the past two years) and long standing members of staff (around 30 appointed before 2000). 19 do not appear to hold post-graduate degrees, but these are predominantly part-time teachers of modern languages who hold specific teaching qualifications. It is also notable that a number of lecturers in business subjects also hold qualifications in teaching English as a Foreign Language. What is most impressive is the wealth of teaching and professional experience the academic staff as a whole bring to the School.
- 2.2.5 There is a formal management committee structure: an Executive Committee, which meets twice a year, a School Management Committee meeting four times a year, and four Staff Meetings every year. Separate academic management structures are described in the next Section of the Report.
- 2.2.6 There are appointments to the posts of Head of Learning, Teaching and Research, Quality Assurance, Careers and Placements and Student Support, whose roles will be discussed in later sections of the Report.
- 2.2.7 The Head of Quality Assurance also acts as the Manager of the Centre for Student and Programme Administration, assisted by a Deputy Manager, a Senior Academic Administrator (Timetabling and Assessments), three Academic Administrators and an Academic Administration Assistant. A Senior International Officer is responsible for the Admissions Office, assisted by an Admissions Officer, and there is an International Programmes Office, Careers and Placements Centre and Alumni and Development Department., all well staffed. In all, the administration of the School is an extremely well-planned and thorough structure.
- 2.2.8 A sample letter of appointment was supplied. This referred to a Contract of Employment for later issue. As the letter itself did not meet the requirements of a written statement of terms and conditions (there was no reference to the period of notice, for instance), it might be worth reviewing this procedure, even though legally the written statement is only required to be issued within the first month of employment. A copy of a current Employers’ Liability Insurance certificate was supplied and was also on display in the School.
- 2.2.9 The School publishes prospectuses for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, complementing attractive material produced by Regent’s College. The prospectuses are very well designed, with a good balance between text and image. Although they obviously function as much as promotional documents as guides to the course requirements, they do not oversell the School or the College, and give a very

balanced and accurate description of what students can expect. There is an excellent website.

2.2.10 The College has a CLA licence.

2.2.11 The administration and staffing of the School was judged to be excellent.

2.3 Quality Management

2.3.1 Entry requirements for the Bachelors programmes are very clearly set out both in the Prospectuses and on the website (basically 2 A levels or the equivalent and IELTS 6.5 or TOEFL 565). The website also lists acceptable overseas qualifications. Assessment of Prior Learning may enable entry with advanced standing, although this would not over-ride the core language requirement. Those enrolling in the International Business degree, which requires proficiency on one or two languages other than English, are subject to a diagnostic test in their chosen language on arrival (unless they declared themselves as absolute beginners). The Foundation Programme has lower entry requirements both in terms of academic qualifications and English language attainment. There is a fast track entry to the degree programmes for those achieving distinctions in all assignments and examinations. In the previous semester 20 out of 53 Foundation students achieved fast track entry, a remarkably high level of achievement.

2.3.2 Entry to the Masters programmes is subject to the guidelines of the QAA Code of Practice for Recruitment and Admissions and the relevant QAA Subject Benchmarks, as well as the terms of the OUVS Handbook for Validated Awards. The procedures are designed to ensure that only those with the likelihood of successful completion enter the programmes, and include an assessment of relevant professional skills and experience. There is provision for exceptional or non-standard entry for those without the minimum academic requirement of a 2.2 degree in business-related subject, based on professional experience (minimum two years for the MSc and 5 years for the MBA) and a formal interview with the Course Leader and Senior Admissions Officer.

2.3.3 The courses are intensive and meet visa requirements. Attendance levels are high, except, apparently, in the modern language modules – the Annual Monitoring Report of the International Business programme in 2004-5 notes the need for a review of attendance policy at language classes. The failure rate in these modules depresses the overall completion rate – EBS-L sets itself a target of a 90% completion rate in all areas, but it was around 85% in the language modules. It must be added that these completion rates are actually impressive, particularly compared with rates of around 66% in the period 1997-2003.

2.3.4 Overall delegated responsibility for the quality of the academic programmes and academic research lies with the Academic Board. It receives reports from a number of committees, notably the Course Boards, Teaching and Learning Committee, the Research and Consultancy Committee and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee.

2.3.5 Almost all committees relate ultimately to the Quality Enhancement Committee which operates under the Head of Quality Assurance. One major task which he has undertaken has been to map Learning Outcomes against QAA guidelines (also using the South East Essex Consortium descriptors) as a basis for programme specifications. The Committee also receives the Annual Monitoring Reviews and tracks the implementation of Action Planning. The Committee monitors the formal Student

- Feedback Systems, receives Departmental Reviews and produces summary reports for the Academic Board. The School was described by one External Examiner as being in a “continuous improvement mode”, and the work of the Quality Enhancement Committee is obviously at the hub of this drive.
- 2.3.6 There are formal mechanisms for obtaining students feedback on the programmes and involving students in the development of the School – the latter being seen as particularly important in building student loyalty to the institution which will later be reflected in an active alumni network. There are questionnaires both on individual modules and the institution (School and College) as a whole. Student representatives attend the meetings of the Academic Board and Course Committees, as well as having individual meetings with Course Leaders and the Head of Quality Assurance, who is in turn responsible for reporting to the Academic Board on the level of student satisfaction.
- 2.3.7 Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for providing both academic and personal support, as well as acting as a further means of communication between individual students and the School management. The personal tutors meet the students on arrival, but there is no longer a formal schedule of meetings between tutors and tutees – the students are aware that the tutors are available if they wish to see them, and tutors will intervene if a student appears to be having difficulties. Student progress is reviewed formally at the end of each semester, and this may also trigger direct intervention either by personal tutors, the Head of Student Support or Course Leaders.
- 2.3.8 An essential element of the teaching and learning programme is the development of individual student Personal Development Portfolios, which not only record progress and the acquisition of skills, but also encourage reflective and autonomous learning. They also act as a bridge between the academic programmes and the career guidance offered through the EBS-L Careers and Placement Centre (see Section 2.5).
- 2.3.9 External moderation of standards is provided in course-specific terms through the external examination procedures, and ultimately through the validation procedures of OUVS. Written comments by External Examiners were available during the inspection, and showed a very high level of satisfaction. A not untypical comment was that “this is a very high quality degree ... which is relevant to international businesses and their employees. It is well-taught and provides appropriate variation for a range of students. Very good standards are achieved” (BA in International Business, Finance).
- 2.3.10 There is a formal induction process for new staff, which requires staff to liaise closely with subject leaders. Two new staff members have been supported in attending a subject-specific teacher training programme at London University. Other staff have been supported in gaining membership of ILTHE.
- 2.3.11 There is a strong emphasis on the development of teaching skills and a very coherent awareness of the learning outcomes which the School considers appropriate to the particular needs of its students. A Learning and Teaching Committee, chaired by the Head of Teaching, Learning and Research, identifies and allocates staff time to projects whose outcomes are then disseminated through in-service gatherings of staff. Recent projects include the areas of independent language learning, technology in the classroom, innovative team assessment and experiential learning. Current projects include an evaluation of the use of Moodle or other e-learning environments, the development of numeracy skills, integrating classroom activity with autonomous learning and the development of the academic value of the periods of study abroad.

The School has also supported the development of teaching materials for possible publication, notably a recent course in Chinese for Business.

- 2.3.12 The School has successfully encouraged staff to undertake peer observation of teaching. This is not itself part of an appraisal process (something itself which is undertaken formally by or on behalf of the Academic Board), but aimed purely at the enhancement of pedagogic skills and a matter of agreement and collaboration between individual staff members.
- 2.3.13 In addition to involvement in the internal projects described in 2.3.10, staff are supported in research programmes, although these themselves are evaluated by the extent to which they underpin teaching and learning in the School. The School itself publishes three research journals: *Research in Global Banking and Finance*, *Research in Language and Cultural Identity* and *Research in International Entrepreneurial Management*. Five staff members are currently undertaking PhD programmes, and one a Master's programme, with financial support from the School.
- 2.3.14 The management of quality in the School is particularly impressive, not simply because it is very thorough in its monitoring of standards and levels of student satisfaction (which it certainly is) but because it is informed by a very clear vision of the needs of its students, leading to very well integrated and dynamic development of skills and standards.

2.4 Student Welfare

- 2.4.1 Prime responsibility for student welfare is delegated to the Head of Student Support, but there is wider involvement both within EBS-L, notably through the personal tutor system, and more generally through the shared provision within Regent's College. The Head of Student Support is responsible for the appointment of personal tutors and for oversight of the personal tutor system. Student pastoral support, and the ready availability of the Head of Student Support or another appropriate staff member to meet students on a one-to-one basis is seen by the School as an essential part of its contract with its clients. Despite the large number of students in the School, the Head of Student Support was confident that virtually all issues can be dealt with through relatively informal personal contact on a day-to-day basis.
- 2.4.2 Provision within Regent's College includes the Student Centre, which not only acts as a focus for the organisation of sporting and social activities and organised excursions, but also assists in enabling student to register with a local medical practice. Advice on personal matters is available from counsellors both within the Student Services Office and amongst residential staff, as well as a free and confidential service for more serious issues provided through the School of Psychotherapy and Counselling, another component member of Regent's College.
- 2.4.3 There are two halls of residence on campus (not visited during this inspection), although the majority of students prefer to find their own accommodation.
- 2.4.4 Apart from those who attended a short English language course for Japanese students (who were accompanied by their own teachers), the College does not receive students under the age of 18. However, the College is developing a Child Protection Policy.
- 2.4.5 The College has employed an outside consultant to advise on reasonable steps which could be taken to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act in respect of physically disabled students, and the College's DDA committee is

reviewing the whole campus provision. Within the School, staff have attended a workshop on dyslexia, and there is a contract with the Dyslexia Centre in Tavistock Square to provide students with diagnosis and counselling.

2.4.6 The Student Welfare provision, both within the School and the College, was considered excellent.

2.5 Teaching and Learning: Delivery and Resources

2.5.1 As noted in the introduction, inspection of teaching was not scheduled as part of this visit. As also noted (2.3.5 and 2.3.9), reports from External Examiners point to a very high level of delivery and achievement.

2.5.2 A number of relevant issues were noted during the course of discussions. Amongst the most positive impressions were:

- a clear definition of learning outcomes which informs the planning and delivery of teaching and assessment
- the excellent integration of academic study with career orientation
- the commitment to innovation in the curriculum, most clearly demonstrated by the Leadership, Creative Management and Psychology and Drama Experience (LCP)
- the growing provision for independent learning, linked with research into ways of integrating this with classroom-based activity
- the more general underpinning of pedagogic development by well-planned and well-supported research projects
- the extensive access to study materials and secondary academic resources provided both through the Tate library (including internet access to data and access to external library resources) and EBS-L's own Learning Resource Centre.

More negatively, the School itself is addressing issues of plagiarism and low attendance at language classes (although the latter case should be viewed in the context of the School's claim that 70% of its graduates are fluent in four or more languages and that all of them are fluent in at least two, which would suggest that ultimately this is not a major concern).

2.5.3 The College Careers and Placement Centre provides an extremely comprehensive level of support to EBS-L students, both in making career choices and in obtaining eventual employment. Its advice is made in an appropriately international context, enabling students to identify target employers in the students' home countries (or chosen work locale). The Professional Development Portfolios created by students during their academic programmes form the basis for monitoring progress towards the chosen career areas, and students are further supported in gaining suitable internships (36 or 24 weeks) within the structure of the undergraduate degrees. Nearer the time of job applications, the Centre provides guidance on writing CVs and interview techniques.

2.5.4 The School organises two major lectures by distinguished speakers (the EBS London International Lecture and the Jean Monet Memorial Lecture), with a view both to raising its own profile and to providing its students with an opportunity to network with invited senior business people and international representatives. Past speakers have included British cabinet ministers, senior politicians from overseas, ambassadors, chief executives of international companies and BBC correspondents.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The European Business School London is remarkable both in the quality of its provision and in its commitment to continuous review and improvement. A notable element of its success is the integration of the academic programme with the acquisition of skills and experience required for successful entry into a career.
- 3.2 The Accreditation and Recognition Committee agreed to the award of continuing accreditation to the European Business School London.

**APPROVED FOR ISSUE TO THE DEAN OF
THE EUROPEAN BUSINESS SCHOOL LONDON
JUNE 2006**

Inspection Summary:

Please note: this summary may be published *as a whole* separately from the full Institutional Report.

The European Business School London was first accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education in 1995. It was most recently re-inspected in 2006.

The School was considered to offer an excellent level of provision in all of the areas assessed during the inspection. There was an excellent integration of the academic programmes with the development of the awareness, skills and experience required by students for entry to their chosen careers, which was further supported by the guidance and advice provided by the Careers and Placements Centre. The level of pastoral and academic support provided by the School, and more generally with Regent's College, was outstanding, as was the School's clear commitment to continuous review of its provision in the light of student comment and the changing international context of business. The School's staff were notable for their wide range of academic and professional qualifications and experience. Academic resources, both within the School and within Regent's College were comprehensive.

The European Business School London was awarded continuing accreditation in April 2006.