

Education Visitors' Report

Recognition of a Satellite Programme

This form is to be completed by the panel secretary following an approval visit to an institution.

Name of Educational Programme Name	McTimoney College of Chiropractic (MCC) – Hong Kong
Start Date of Programme	October 2023
Date of Visit	20 & 21 October 2025

Panel Chair	Rabia Ahmed
Panel Members	Mark Webster
Observers	Penny Bance
Panel Secretary	Elizabeth Austin

Introduction
<p>MCC opened its Hong Kong campus in October 2023, delivering its existing four-year full-time Master of Chiropractic programme. After several discussions with the GCC during 2025, MCC submitted documentation in September 2025 for consideration through the GCC satellite recognition process. Recognition_of_satellite_programmes.pdf (gcc-uk.org)</p> <p>MCC completed the Stage 2 Outline Business Case template and the Stage 3 mapping document, focusing primarily on Section 2 of the Education Standards. The Approval Panel consisted of Rabia Ahmed and Mark Webster, who supported MCC with the implementation of the new Education Standards. They were familiar with the programme, having undertaken a comprehensive review of the programme in March 2024.</p> <p>Following a desk top analysis, a visit to the satellite campus was arranged for 20th – 21st October 2025 to tour facilities and meet with staff and students.</p> <p>The University of Ulster undertook an oversight visit to Hong Kong in October 2023 to review a wide range of academic matters, including resources, staffing and student-related issues.</p>

Staff members, groups, facilities and resources seen			
	Yes	No	N/A
Principal	✓		
Representative(s) from validating institution			✓
Senior management responsible for programme resources.	✓		
Programme Leader	✓		
Faculty staff	✓		
Students	✓		
Patients			✓
Clinic facilities	✓		
Learning Resources (e.g. IT, library facilities)	✓		
Other			

How areas of concern were addressed

Panel meeting with Senior Management Team (SMT)

Overview

The Panel asked members of the SMT to provide them with a rationale for how the satellite programme fits in with the institution's strategy. The Principal shared that the College has a strong ethos for widening education and it was felt that a campus in Hong Kong would strengthen its provision in Southeast Asia.

The Panel was informed that chiropractic has been a regulated profession in Hong Kong since 1993, but there are fewer than 400 chiropractors in Hong Kong. The College has been recruiting inbound students from Hong Kong over the last 10 years and there was evidence that the cost and upheaval of relocating to the UK was an impediment to some prospective students training as a chiropractor. Workforce planning undertaken by the College also suggested that the requirement for chiropractors in Hong Kong was growing strongly, and that the number of graduates was not meeting this demand.

The College therefore decided there was a clear opportunity to deliver its four-year Master of Chiropractic programme in Hong Kong and took steps to register in Hong Kong as a non-local body delivering non-local education. It was accredited in February 2023 by the Hong Kong Education Bureau following a two year process. The College's qualifications are also recognised by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), which is the Hong Kong equivalent of the UK Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), as an equivalent HK qualification at Masters level.

Partnerships and stakeholders

The Principal further explained that the College was required to develop appropriate local partnerships to support the establishment of its education provision. The College established a partnership with The Universal College of Higher Education (UCHE)

which is a local established operator with experience in delivering non-local qualifications. UCHE provides the teaching facilities and administrative support for the College. The Panel was informed that the partnership agreement is operating effectively, and the contract has two years remaining and is expected to be renewed. In the longer term, the college aims to develop a formal partnership with a local Hong Kong university to strengthen academic collaboration.

A clinical partnership has been established with the New York Medical Group (NYMG), part of EC Healthcare, the largest non hospital healthcare provider in Hong Kong. This is where the main student clinic will be based.

The Principal informed the Panel that the College also has an additional clinical contract with Carelife Medical Group at a private rehabilitation hospital in Shenzhen, one hour away from Hong Kong. It is proposed that students will undertake one week rotations, up to five times a year at this clinic. The students will be embedded in multi-disciplinary teams and see a wide range of adult MSK problems especially elderly care.

The Principal also shared an ambition for future local student clinics to contribute to China's ten year strategy to expand and strengthen community level clinics and grassroots health services by providing community-based outreach and support.

The SMT shared that they had developed strong links with the Chiropractic Doctors' Association of Hong Kong (CDAHK), the largest chiropractic association in Hong Kong, the British Consulate and the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The programme team has been greatly encouraged by the strong interest expressed by local chiropractors in contributing to the programme, and plans are in place to draw on this expertise as the programme continues to expand.

Chiropractic in Hong Kong

The SMT shared that Chiropractic in Hong Kong holds comparable professional standing to the UK and is generally well accepted by other healthcare professions. Most chiropractors work collaboratively in private clinics or hospitals rather than in sole practice. The Chiropractors Council of Hong Kong enforces a highly prescriptive code of practice, though core professional principles remain consistent with GCC Standards.

When asked by the Panel, why the College wished to gain GCC approval, the Principal shared that many students have expressed a desire to work in the UK and programme approval would allow them to register with the GCC upon graduation without sitting the Test of Competence.

Programme delivery and quality assurance

The Panel was informed that in line with the College's experiences in developing its other satellite campuses, the Hong Kong campus is based on centralised administrative functions, integrated use of existing teaching staff to ensure equivalency of delivery and increasing employment of local teaching and administrative staff as the programme develops.

The College is currently utilising dedicated local staff as well as staff from Abingdon and Manchester to teach the curriculum. The Principal shared that this model ensures the quality of delivery is comparable across multiple delivery sites, as well as providing the platform to establish and grow local staff for the future.

The Panel was informed that in recent months, eight new staff members have been appointed, including clinic supervisors and academics. The Principal confirmed that as student numbers increase, the college will maintain its standard ratio of students to practical training staff. Additional local chiropractors will be appointed and trained as educators as required to support programme growth.

The SMT explained that as the curriculum progresses, further local specialist academic staff will be recruited to teach under the guidance and supervision of the existing faculty. When students reach their clinical training phase, a dedicated team of clinic supervisors will be established, drawn from the pool of trained technique staff who will receive additional preparation for this enhanced role.

The Panel learned that a clinic manager based in the UK, will relocate to Hong Kong in the Spring of 2026 to oversee the development and running of the student clinics.

SMT confirmed that the programme is delivered entirely in English. Clinical observations and placements, however, may be conducted in Chinese, depending on which language was most appropriate for the patient. English language entry requirements, including IELTS standards, are consistent with those applied at other campuses, and there have been no reported language difficulties, with all students demonstrating fluency in English. Clinical records and documentation are maintained in English. To date, all enrolled students have been local, with no applications received from outside the region.

SMT assured the Panel that key quality assurance mechanisms were firmly in place and included monthly reviews with UCHE, to monitor student progress and identify areas for improvement. External Examiner reports and data tracking are used to evaluate student outcomes, with the most recent analysis confirming that Hong Kong students achieved full equivalency with other campuses. The Hong Kong Education Bureau also has access to meeting minutes and requires an annual return be submitted to verify that the programme delivered in Hong Kong remains fully aligned with the main programme. The Panel was assured that all quality assurance processes are the same as those in force in the UK.

Student recruitment

The Panel asked about risk mitigation should recruitment numbers be undersubscribed. The Principal informed the Panel that the business plan for Hong Kong was predicated on an initial intake of 10 students rising to 20 students thereafter. Actual intakes have been slightly higher, with 12 students in year three, 12 students in year two and 27 students in the new year one intake. The Principal confirmed that if the programme became non-viable due to under recruitment, plans are in place to either

teach out or offer students the opportunity to complete their studies in the UK if necessary.

SMT shared that all current students are from Hong Kong, though future recruitment will extend into the Greater Bay Area. The student profile differs from other campuses, with a higher proportion of male students, currently around 60%, and an average age of 33. Many are entering chiropractic as a second career, having previously worked in fields such as traditional Chinese medicine, physical therapy, or sports science.

When asked about the main threat to the programme, SMT identified the lack of formal recognition as the most significant concern, noting that this can create a degree of uncertainty for students. They also expanded that the chiropractic profession in Hong Kong is politicised, requiring the programme to navigate these sensitivities carefully.

Tour of the Campus

The College's programme is taught on the premises of UCHE, which are located in the district of Mong Kok. There are two teaching buildings within a few minutes walking distance of each other, and students have access to both buildings as needed. The College currently has exclusive use of three teaching rooms, and additional rooms are available as needed to support the programme delivery as it expands. The Panel observed a large technique training room equipped with specialist equipment such as chiropractic benches and anatomical models.

The Panel also observed a small physical library with some hardcopy books and student study facilities. The Panel was informed that in common with all other College students whatever their location, the students have full access to the College's online library with electronic books and databases. Students all have access to the College's virtual learning environment (VLE), including electronic resources such as Anatomy TV.

Clinic facilities

The Panel toured the extensive facilities of the NYMG, a short distance from the main teaching buildings, which will house the main student clinic. The facilities are located over seven floors, with the chiropractic clinic sitting in the Centre of Rehabilitation and Exercising Specialist (CORES).

The Panel observed over 30 chiropractic treatment rooms alongside dedicated facilities for health checks and medical specialities including imaging equipment, where students will undertake the management of patients under close supervision. Initially, the College clinic will use three rooms with the option to expand when needed.

Current students have undertaken observations at NYMG including observations of chiropractors, nurses and GPs. Students will also have access to surgical rounds.

Meeting with the programme delivery team

The Panel met with ten members of the programme delivery team, seven in person and three virtually from the Abingdon campus.

Teaching, learning and assessment

The Panel questioned how the programme delivery and provision is overseen. The Director of Programmes shared that teaching on the Hong Kong chiropractic programme is delivered through a blend of online and in-person sessions with a slightly higher proportion of online delivery compared to the UK. The programme follows the same teaching sequence as the UK curriculum, though not always concurrently due to the time difference. Block teaching is used for UK-based staff, typically involving five days of intensive in-person delivery at the beginning of a module, followed by online follow-up once staff have returned to the UK. This approach varies between modules but has proven effective and sustainable. All practical classes are delivered face-to-face, while modules such as Human Function and Clinical Medicine include a higher proportion of online content.

The Panel was informed that assessments are standardised across all campuses to ensure equivalence. The same question banks are used, though specific papers are adapted to accommodate time differences. Examinations are quality-assured in the UK, with consistent standard-setting and moderation processes in place. Early assessments are double marked across sites to ensure parity, and new assessors receive formal training.

Faculty and delivery model

The Panel was keen to learn how the faculty managed the demands of regularly travelling between campuses. The programme team shared that they managed their workload effectively through carefully planned block teaching schedules, with visits arranged well in advance. These typically include three one week blocks early in the semester and further visits for assessments. Staff reported that this is a workable model, supported by time-off-in-lieu arrangements and workload coordination overseen by the academic leadership team. Recent staff recruitment in Abingdon has increased the available teaching pool, and participation in Hong Kong teaching remains voluntary, based on individual capacity and expertise.

Learning environment

Excluding the clinic facilities, the Panel was keen to understand the broader learning environment available to students. The programme team explained that students benefit from well-equipped facilities comparable to those in the UK. Teaching rooms are air-conditioned and fitted with the same practical benches used at the main campus. Anatomy models and access to Anatomy TV via the VLE enable students to continue interactive study at home. The team also promotes team building and a strong sense of community among students and staff through regular group activities.

The programme leader explained that, initially, staff observed some reticence from students during interactive sessions, reflecting cultural learning styles rather than a lack of engagement. This has improved significantly through deliberate strategies such as setting reflective and participatory tasks, modelling critical discussion, and reinforcing expectations during induction. Open days and admissions interviews are

also used to familiarise prospective students with the interactive teaching approach and to encourage early engagement.

Curriculum and contextualisation

The Panel queried how relevant legislative, regulatory policy and healthcare differences between Hong Kong and the UK are taught and assessed. The team shared that the curriculum mirrors the UK programme in content and structure but includes contextualised elements relevant to Hong Kong practice. This includes discussion of the Hong Kong Chiropractic Code of Practice, guest speakers from the local profession, and comparative exercises exploring differences between UK and Hong Kong healthcare systems. As Hong Kong's healthcare is predominantly private, these discussions enhance students' understanding of local practice contexts. From October 2025, chiropractors in Hong Kong will also gain access to patient records, a development that has been incorporated into teaching discussions.

Meeting with the clinic team

The Panel met with the Clinic Manager (Abingdon) and the Principal of the College

Clinic planning and observations

The Panel heard from the Clinic Manager that preparations for the student clinic were underway. He explained that the main student clinic will be located within the NYMG building and will comprise three treatment rooms. The clinic will operate under the same governance arrangements, policies, and procedures as the UK clinics and will use the Practice Hub system for record keeping. It will initially accommodate twelve students, operating Monday to Friday with two daily sessions and the flexibility to expand to three as demand increases. All rooms are fully equipped with audio and video facilities, and a dedicated supervisor's office will be provided.

When asked about the patient base, the Principal explained that the clinic will provide affordable chiropractic care to the local community. In addition to attracting patients through its own advertising, those who have undergone diagnostic assessments at NYMG but are unable to afford full treatment packages may be referred to the student clinic. Plans are also in progress to establish a community-based clinic at another location, which will further extend access to chiropractic care. The clinic will additionally serve as an observation placement for lower-year students, providing early exposure to patient interaction and clinical practice.

The Panel was informed that students currently undertake clinic observations at one of the technique instructors' private clinics. Up to three students at a time participate in structured observation sessions, allowing them to develop practical skills such as patient history-taking and palpation before beginning formal clinical practice. The Clinic Manager further confirmed that, from October 2026, students will also undertake five one-week clinical rotations at the Shenzhen Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation Hospital, under the supervision of the Clinic Director.

The Clinic Manager shared with the Panel the plan for clinical supervisor training and the day to day running of the clinic.

As in all campuses, students will sit a Clinic Entrance Exam at the end of year three to ensure they are fit to enter clinic, and a Clinic Exit Exam at the end of year four to ensure they are fit to practise.

The Panel was pleased to note that a Patient Engagement Group is being established to ensure that service users' perspectives inform clinic development.

Meeting with staff responsible for student support / academic administration

The Panel met with five members of staff including the Director of Student Experience, Vice Principal and the Student Liaison Officer.

The Panel queried how students will access student support services while on the programme. The staff explained that student support structures and processes in Hong Kong are identical to those in operation across all other campuses. The only difference is the addition of a dedicated Student Liaison Officer based locally in Hong Kong. The liaison officer explained that she is also responsible for marketing and recruitment activities, responding to initial enquiries, supporting applicants through the admissions process, and continuing as the first point of contact for enrolled students. She signposts students to appropriate sources of advice, whether related to programme administration or emotional support, either through the VLE or via local channels. A dedicated Hong Kong page on the VLE provides all relevant contact details and information specific to this location.

The staff explained that every student is assigned a personal tutor, with each campus location having its own tutor for each year group. While the formal route is through personal tutors, students are encouraged to reach out to any staff member they feel comfortable with. There is a dedicated programme support email box for student issues which the team monitor and respond to.

The Panel was informed that UCHE, as the local delivery partner, also plays an important role in student welfare. Administrative staff on the ground monitor attendance, maintain contact with students, and check on their general wellbeing. UCHE also acts as a bridge between the UK institution and Hong Kong authorities to ensure the programme remains fully aligned with its UK counterpart.

Regarding academic support, the Panel was informed that where a tutor identified a student who may require reasonable adjustments, they were referred to the Disability Support Manager for screening. Adjustments such as extra time in assessments were implemented based on the screening outcome.

The Panel was informed that no language or communication issues have been identified, as all students are fluent in English. English proficiency is assessed during the admissions interview, and additional support would be provided if required. Study skills support is embedded within the VLE and supplemented by librarian guidance and tutor input. Students complete a range of online study tasks and self-diagnostic

assessments on learning styles during induction. The teaching team's local experience also contributes to developing students' independent study and professional skills.

Tuesday 21 October

Meeting with students

The Panel met with a representative group of ten students to gain insight into their experiences of the programme, including its organisation, delivery, support structures, and overall student life.

The group represented a mix of year levels with many pursuing chiropractic as a second career, having previously worked as sports trainers, pharmacy dispensers, nurses, or sports therapists.

Regarding the organisation of the programme, students informed the Panel that it was well organised, highlighting that the blend of online and face-to-face learning provided a good balance and suited their personal and professional commitments. They found the induction process informative, and they appreciated that teaching was structured and progressed logically. Overall, they expressed satisfaction with the MCC team's responsiveness, noting that questions were answered promptly and that communication was clear.

When asked about student support, the group confirmed that tutors typically respond to emails within 24 hours and that they are clear about who to contact for specific queries. Students spoke positively about their personal tutors, UCHE staff, and the Student Liaison Officer, who provided accessible on-the-ground support. One example shared with the Panel described how the programme team arranged remedial sessions for a student returning after a period of absence to help them catch up, which students viewed as a strong reflection of the programme's supportive approach.

Students also described a range of clinical placement experiences. They have undertaken observations within the NYMG as well as in external chiropractic practices run by MCC graduates. In addition, they are encouraged to observe practitioners in related disciplines such as Traditional Chinese Medicine and physiotherapy. Students informed the Panel that as they progress, they will also complete placements at the Shenzhen Rehabilitation Hospital up to five times a year.

When discussing student life, the group described a strong sense of community. They have established a WhatsApp group for communication, contributed to a School newsletter, and are in the process of forming a student society. The students shared that they support each other and lower-year students, which has helped build an inclusive student culture.

Students reported no difficulty studying in English, as it is the standard language of formal education in Hong Kong. They also noted that study skills development was integrated into the induction process, covering areas such as mind mapping, brainstorming, and use of virtual learning resources.

Two students expressed an interest in pursuing career opportunities in the UK following graduation.

Account of verbal summary given to the institution

During the final meeting with the Senior Management Team, the Panel Chair stated that its indicative recommendation to the Education Committee is to:

- recommend approval of the programme with conditions

It was agreed that the approval report would be shared with the College for fact checking by 5 November 2025 for return to the GCC by 12 November 2025. The report will be presented to the Education Committee at its November meeting. If it is agreed that the programme meets all the Education Standards, the Committee will recommend to the Council of the GCC that the programme should be approved.

The Council of the GCC considers and decides whether to accept the recommendation of the Education Committee. The decision of the Council to recognise a new programme is then progressed to the Privy Council, if required, for its approval.

Recommendation to Education Committee

1. Approve <u>without</u> conditions	
2. Approve <u>with</u> conditions	✓
3. No approval (insufficient evidence due to serious deficiencies)	

Conditions for the institution with reasons and timeframes in which they are to be met.

1. **Clinic Development:** Establish the hub clinic in advance of the anticipated need for pre-clinical and clinical training, to be completed by **June 2026**. The GCC will require ongoing assurance of these arrangements through appropriate means.
2. **Clinic Development:** Establish the Shenzhen spoke clinic in advance of the anticipated need for pre-clinical and clinical training, to be completed by **June 2026**. The GCC will require ongoing assurance of these arrangements through appropriate means.
3. **Expansion Planning:** Expand and enhance resources and clinic spaces in line with cohort growth, projected for **2028**

Recommendations for the institution

1. **Staffing Review:** Regularly assess staffing levels and expand as needed based on demand and programme requirements

Commendations to the institution

The panel would like to commend:

1. The successful development of relationships with key stakeholders, including the British Consulate, the Hong Kong Legislative Council, EC Healthcare, and CDAHK
2. The widening of access to the chiropractic profession through the provision of a full time programme in Hong Kong.
3. The implementation of a hub-and-spoke clinical placement model that expands training opportunities and supports the development of community-based healthcare

Signed

Rabia Ahmed

Panel Chair

Date: 05/11/25

