

Review for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of the International School of Sikh Studies, June 2013

Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that the International School of Sikh Studies (the School) has made acceptable progress with implementing the action plan from the June 2012 [Review for Educational Oversight](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review visit

2 The School currently has no students. When it recruits overseas students it intends to offer programmes for the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), the Association of Business Executives (ABE) and the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), but also intends to seek approval to offer other accountancy and management programmes.

3 The trustees of the School and its partner institution Khalsa College have purchased the freehold of the property both institutions occupy in Harrow. This was leased at the time of the 2012 review.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The School responded to the action plan by putting appropriate structures in place to address the various issues. However, the effectiveness of these changes will only become apparent once it has students on its programmes.

5 The School developed means for identifying student representatives to attend the weekly formal Staff Committee meetings. This will help ensure clear lines of communication leading to effective interaction between staff and students.

6 The School revised its committee structures appropriately. There is a workable arrangement of management and academic groups and meetings with clear terms of reference and constitutions. The School's procedures, within its quality assurance cycle, enable the Board of Governors and Academic Board to monitor quality management policies and practices formally. It combined the Policy Handbook and Quality Manual into a single document, which contains a brief statement on the Quality Assurance Policy. In addition, there are two helpful flow charts illustrating the quality assurance cycle for management processes and for academic professional courses. However, the documents continue to omit the key academic policies for student feedback and representation and annual monitoring. A template is now available for annual monitoring, supported by quarterly monitoring based on regular testing of students, the outcomes of termly teaching observations, feedback from external examiners and student progression data. However, it is not made explicit how the information will be consolidated to give an overall picture for monitoring purposes. The School has yet to design an assessment feedback pro forma to ensure students receive full and constructive feedback to assist their learning development.

7 The School produced a formal procedure for checking the accuracy of published information. The newly formed Policies and Planning Committee is responsible for updating all public documents. In addition, Staff Committee meetings and the Academic Board

undertake close and regular scrutiny of publicity materials, including the website, and student handbooks. The Principal is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of published information, subject to final approval by the Vice-Chancellor. Regular staff meetings and student surveys are used to ensure the currency of information. The School has gone further than proposed in the action plan and appointed a member of staff with expertise in social media to promote the School's image.

8 Staff have a good awareness of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the requirements of the awarding organisations. The School has also taken steps to improve awareness of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). Regular meetings of the Staff Committee, with student representation, will provide an appropriate formal mechanism for student involvement.

9 The School has an appropriate standard list of contents for teachers' files, which are customised to the programmes being taught by individual tutors. The Principal will check file contents, to ensure they are updated as necessary, and report to Academic Board, which will also view a sample of the staff files. All recent documentation from awarding organisations shows that they have ceased to use the title 'University' when referring to the School.

Section 4: Progress in working with the external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education

10 The School has improved awareness of the Quality Code. The Principal attends meetings organised by QAA and provides feedback to colleagues. A training week for all staff to be held in August will include sessions on the Quality Code. In addition, the School has produced a detailed document for teaching staff indicating how the School's expectations about learning and teaching aligns with the indicators for teaching practice. QCF guidelines and the Quality Code have been discussed at the Academic Board. However, there is no reference to external reference points in the School's Annual Report.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

11 The monitoring visit serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring visit or review.

12 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Peter Clarke (Coordinator) and Mrs Patricia Millner (Reviewer) on 6 June 2013.