

Review for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of the International School of Sikh Studies, June 2014

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 continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [previous monitoring visit in July 2013](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 The School began recruiting to its programmes in January 2014 and currently has a total of 22 students studying for awards from two awarding organisations: the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (12) and the Chartered Management Institute (10). It is also approved to offer one programme from the Association of Business Executives, but has not recruited to it. The School gained accreditation in March 2014 to run the Association of International Accountants professional qualification and hopes to recruit to it in the near future. It employed four new teaching staff in 2013 and now has a total of 12.

3 The School regained its licence to sponsor migrants under Tier 4 in October 2013 and is now A rated.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

4 The School's weekly staff meetings have recommenced and remain an example of good practice. All staff are required to attend. Students are required to attend these meetings once a month, but may attend at any time. The meetings complement the School's 'Open Door' policy, which students find very helpful.

5 The School's revised committee structure is now operational and working well. Oversight of quality management of the provision is the responsibility of the Academic Board, which meets formally seven times per year and informally as necessary.

6 The School has merged the Policy Handbook and Quality Manual into one policy document and significantly revised its quality assurance cycle, which has led to useful further developments. The School's Student Handbook was completely redesigned and, following recommendations from the Chartered Management Institute, the Policy Handbook now has sections on conflicts of interest, malpractice for students and staff, and plagiarism and collusion. The section on quality assurance, however, remains underdeveloped.

7 The School has not yet completed a full academic year's cycle of teaching and so has not had the opportunity to conduct an annual monitoring or to review module files. It has updated two useful quality assurance cycle documents, one for professional courses and another for management processes. The School continues to gather evidence to support annual monitoring for use with a new annual monitoring template, but it remains unclear how the evidence will be evaluated. The small number of completed student assignments to date demonstrates good written feedback, some of it on the assessments themselves and some on a 'term report' pro forma. The School collects student feedback on its teaching. Students

are unanimously satisfied with oral feedback and guidance. They noted that, if necessary, they receive one-to-one tuition and extra classes.

8 All of the School's information is overseen and formally checked by the Principal, before final approval by the Vice-Chancellor. Information is also scrutinised at the weekly staff meetings and at Academic Board. The School's presence and activities on social media are monitored by one member of staff.

9 Students have set up the Student Course Representative meeting and the Student Representatives Body, but there is no written policy on student representation. The Student Course Representative meeting has been held once, although low student numbers mean that various posts are currently unfilled.

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

10 The School is making good progress in working with external reference points. It recently produced a very helpful document mapping School policies to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code). It uses this document to select specific sections of the Quality Code for regular discussion at the weekly meetings, which are followed up by application to teaching and administrative activities. Staff demonstrated good awareness of sections of the Quality Code and the Qualifications and Credit Framework. Whenever staff undergo external professional training or development on external reference points, they always report on what they have learned to their colleagues at the weekly meetings.

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 Professor Edward J Esche (Coordinator) and Mrs Catherine Symonds (Reviewer) on 10 June 2014.

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