



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of ESCP Europe-Business School, February 2016

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 ESCP Europe-Business School has made acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [previous monitoring visit](#) in December 2014.

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 A new director of the London campus has been appointed who has extensive experience of university-sector higher education in the UK. A specific focus has been placed on quality assurance at the London campus, particularly on meeting the recommendations of external reviews and the expectations of higher education in the UK for all the master's degrees delivered in London. This is led by an experienced member of the faculty, who has been appointed as Director of Academic Quality and Student Services. The School has completed the appointment of external examiners for all the London master's courses.

3 A new course, Bachelor in Management, accredited in Germany, has been introduced for study in the first year in London. Other awards continue as at the previous monitoring visit. The student headcount at the time of the data return has increased from 335 to 370 from the previous monitoring visit, which took place in the first semester of last year, and had risen further to 529 at the time of this visit, which was conducted in the second semester of this year when more courses are running. Most students continue to be recruited from within the European Union, but international student numbers are increasing, with 21 students on short period study visas recorded in the first semester and 11 Tier 4 students spending two semesters in the UK. Staffing has been strengthened by three new and additional appointments.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

4 ESCP London continues to implement and refine the actions arising from the review visit in 2012 and matters identified in subsequent monitoring reports. The monitoring visit in 2014 found that most actions were complete and had been monitored, but identified a need to ensure more rigorous reporting and standardisation of examination board practices, and continued attention to particular areas of staff development. At this visit the team was able to revisit some areas of identified good practice and could confirm, in passing, that students still consider the careers support available to them in London to be highly effective and the best available at any ESCP campus. The School recognises the need to introduce more systematic action planning prior to future QAA visits.

5 There is a robust process of course review, under the auspices of City University, each semester for the UK-validated Master in Management (MIM) programme. The London MIM Board of Studies reports both to the UK Course Board and the European Board, and the Course Board in turn informs European decisions. This includes clearly identified actions and a management report on these. The London campus continues to develop a similarly effective quality management and reporting structure for its European-validated

courses. Board of Studies reports are now produced in a standard format each semester. From 2015-16 an Annual Programme Board is being introduced for the awards largely completed at the London campus, where federal-level board meetings do not take place, and a London Academic Directors Group has also been introduced where programmes and peer observations are reviewed on a monthly basis. This has provided additional internal quality and standards monitoring and enhancement. While programme reporting is formalised, action plans are not routinely used. The monitoring of action points is informal and is the responsibility of the associated manager. The School stated that it was committed to introducing action planning at the London campus in the current academic year.

6 The internal moderation process for assessments is now fully implemented and the reporting of exam boards has been standardised. ESCP London continues to develop the feedback to students provided by staff across all programmes. The feedback on group assessments is adequately provided at the following lectures. Individual assignments have a frontsheet with brief individual comments. However, beyond this, individual feedback is not routinely given. Students can obtain further individual feedback but are required to contact the professor via the programmes office. Students who fail an assessment are given feedback and tutorial support before resubmission. Students expressed both satisfaction with feedback when it is given and a desire for greater individual written comment on submitted work.

7 ESCP continues to support staff in their professional development, including mentoring for Higher Education Academy fellowship applications, with several applications approved or in progress. Other staff are engaging in European equivalents. Nine members of staff have participated in an intensive Harvard course on participant-centred teaching and the impact is apparent in the records of peer observation, with peer encouragement of more interactive teaching methods. Peer observations are routinely conducted in a supportive manner with immediate feedback discussions. Staff events occur across campuses for the sharing of best practice and introduction of new strategies, such as a revised virtual learning environment (VLE).

8 ESCP Europe has a clearly defined and robust admissions process to ensure fairness and transparency. The academic entry requirements and admissions process, involving required documentation, admissions tests and an interview, are outlined in the admission information, ensuring the applicants are clear on the process and procedures. The required IELTS score for master's programmes is 7.0 and for the bachelor's 6.5, although this is not stated on the website. Most students will have sufficient facility in at least two European languages. Entry is competitive and students are of high calibre, resulting in excellent outcomes. The students found the admissions process beneficial and that it reflected the requirements of demanding postgraduate education.

9 Student retention, progression and achievement data for the master's programmes is monitored at a local and federal level. The London campus management has reflected on the significance of monitoring student retention and associated student support services. In response, it has reviewed roles of key senior staff and created the new role of Director of Academic Quality and Student Services. Retention rates are very high in London and across Europe. Only one student has withdrawn from the MIM programme in the last five years and Europe-wide data shows retention rates on other master's programmes rates in the 95 to 99 per cent range. Students who fail assignments and who are referred (about seven per cent of the total) normally pass on resubmission, with 100 per cent pass rates on the MIM programme. Of those who complete the various master's programmes, 95 to 100 per cent successfully achieve the award.

10 The London campus continues its good practice with student engagement. Regular meetings are held between the student representatives and course organisers.

Students report that all staff are very approachable and responsive. Students are confident in raising issues and that resolutions will be found. If no resolution is feasible, the students are informed of the reasons. Routinely, students submit an annual report to the Board of Studies meetings demonstrating clear communications between the institution and the student body.

11 The use of a local VLE at the London campus was previously identified as good practice. ESCP Europe has now invested, across campuses, in a new VLE platform. The team reviewed this development to ensure it has enhanced the learning experience of students and continued good practice. The main features of the previous provision are replicated, and it additionally enables online discussion forums and assessment facilities across campuses. Although training was delivered, the London staff are aware that further training and development is required to enable full use of the platforms' capabilities and consistency across the modules and programmes.

12 ESCP Europe in London continues to make steady progress and to introduce measures that meet UK expectations for students undertaking the London element of their study.

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

13 ESCP aims for all provision at its London campus to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and continues to develop those mechanisms identified in previous monitoring reports to achieve this. A Teaching Handbook has been produced for staff in addition to the revised Quality Handbook to help staff meet UK expectations. External examiners are now appointed for all master's programmes taught in London and their contribution is effective. The new master's programmes developed in London, the Master in Marketing and Creativity, and the Master in Energy Management, make reference to *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* and Subject Benchmark Statements to ensure, for example, that learning outcomes are relevant and are written at an appropriate level.

14 ESCP Europe works with a wide range of external reference points. It holds accreditation by the European Quality Improvement System, which specialises in higher education institutions delivering management and business administration awards; the Association of MBAs; and the Association of Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business. This is in addition to meeting the national expectations of higher education in the other European countries in which it makes provision, particularly those of France and Germany, where it holds degree awarding powers. Expectations in those countries, in some instances, differ markedly to UK expectations, which poses some problems of resolution at European level.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

15 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.

16 The monitoring visit was carried out by Dr John Hurley, Coordinator, and Mrs Rebecca Morrison, Reviewer, on 23 February 2016.

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