



Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Foundation for International Education, June 2015

Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review panel concludes that the Foundation for International Education (FIE) has made commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [previous monitoring visit](#) in June 2013.

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 There have been no recorded material changes since the last monitoring visit, with 1,268 students enrolled for 2014-15 (673 full-time equivalents).

3 The validation process with Kingston University mentioned in the previous monitoring report was successfully completed but the option to offer the award of UK credit to some students studying programmes at FIE will not be operationalised.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

4 In addition to fully completing and evaluating the actions arising from its 2012 RSEO review and continuing to build on the features of good practice, FIE has developed its own quality assurance action plan referenced to relevant chapters, and associated indicators, of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) and is formalising its approach to capturing and disseminating good practice, for example through the work of the Teaching and Learning Committee (see paragraph 9).

5 FIE has maintained and strengthened the features of good practice identified in its 2012 RSEO report. It has undertaken further work on the implementation of grading criteria through the development of assignment level learning outcomes with the aim of providing further clarity in terms of what is expected of students and how this is mapped to course and programme outcomes. At the time of this monitoring visit FIE's pilot project in relation to this initiative had just been completed. The roll-out is planned for its autumn 2015 courses following development work with its academic faculty.

6 The International Internship Course (IIC) has undergone further enhancement since the previous monitoring visit including: the development and use of an e-portfolio system and a course pack (the IIC Passport) which has brought together all reading and developmental activities into one place; the introduction of designated internship mentors; a requirement for CVs to be updated; provision of more focused one-to-one guidance; a mid-term internship appraisal; a stronger link between the organisation of the internship and the seminar programme; and the provision of additional information for students prior to departure for the UK. FIE monitors the internship experience of students through feedback from students and internship providers.

7 The Faculty handbook continues to be an important source of information for teaching staff. It is reviewed annually through the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Recent additions include the Academic Integrity Policy and associated Academic Integrity Honour Code, a new policy on the rescheduling of assessments and a new Human Participant Research at FIE policy. Since the last monitoring visit there have also been additions to the resources available within the Virtual Faculty Lounge and this has been further integrated with the Professional Development Portal. A student-facing Virtual Student Lounge has been developed. Faculty members confirmed the accessibility and usefulness of the handbook; they and students commented positively regarding the resources available through the Virtual Faculty Lounge and Virtual Student Lounge.

8 FIE's support for academic writing has also undergone further enhancement since the 2013 monitoring visit including: recruitment of an additional Writing Support Tutor (taking the number to four); regular meetings of the writing support team; development of a student-facing writing support area on the Virtual Student Lounge and for staff on the Virtual Faculty Lounge; a more detailed data tracking and programme report process; and further promotion of the support available. FIE has appraised the impact of these enhancements as the increased uptake of the facility and associated recruitment of a further Writing Support Tutor (now five), enhanced communication between faculty and the Writing Support Tutors and improved student writing skills. Students were very appreciative of the support provided by the Writing Support Tutors in the development of their academic writing skills.

9 Recommendations from the 2012 Review have been fully addressed. The role of the course convenors has been further embedded. They have strengthened the coordination of faculty through more regular communication by email and meetings and, as members of FIE's Teaching and Learning Committee, are able to influence changes to processes. A new system of course feedback has been utilised and evaluated. Course feedback is shared with faculty and feeds into the Faculty Assessment and Peer feedback process as appropriate, and is also discussed at the Teaching and Learning Committee to highlight good practice and identify any themes. An extensive review of the programme feedback system has also been undertaken, resulting in a revised process and questions.

10 The evidence available to the team confirmed that FIE's recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. Students are usually recruited through their home institutions with good grade point averages. A small number of students are admitted directly and the criteria and process is accessible to applicants through FIE's online system. The process is undertaken by the FIE Admission Committee utilising FIE's well-established formal admissions procedure; the process allows students to complain or appeal against an admissions decision. Where necessary students undertake an English Language test. Additional support for students is offered through the Writing Support Tutors, a Conversation Club and, for first-year students, one-to-one faculty mentoring. FIE operates an equal opportunities policy.

11 FIE operates valid and reliable processes of assessment. Course syllabuses are approved by partners and include an assessment plan. Students confirmed that they are clear about what is expected of them in relation to assessment and are made aware of FIE's Academic Integrity Policy during Academic Orientation as well as through course syllabuses. Information for staff on assessment is set out in the Faculty Handbook and on the Virtual Faculty Lounge. A process of cross-marking takes place and is detailed in the FIE Faculty Handbook and monitored by the Director of Academics.

12 Students who met the team were very positive about their learning experiences with reference to the application process, the information provided, communications with staff and the quality of teaching. Students value the different learning styles that they encounter in the UK, and particularly appreciated the variety of site visits they had experienced, which gave a practical approach to their studies.

Section 4: Progress in working with the relevant external reference points relating to academic standards and quality for higher education

13 FIE works effectively with a range of external reference points. FIE has a draft map of its provision against the UK Quality Code for Higher Education which formed the basis of a staff workshop in May 2015 and is driving forward some of its recent plans for enhancing the student experience. FIE has been accredited by British Accreditation Council since 2006 and received reaccreditation in 2014. FIE also has accreditation from the US based Forum on Education Abroad; in 2014 it submitted its interim Quality Improvement Plan with a positive outcome. FIE also commissioned an Access, Inclusion and Diversity evaluation at FIE London and is engaging positively with the recommendations arising from the report.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

14 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.

15 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Alan Hunt (QAA Officer) and Professor Diane Meehan (review panel member) on 4 June 2015.

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