



This review method
is ESG-compliant

Annual Monitoring for Educational Oversight

CIEE Study Abroad London Ltd

April 2025



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of CIEE Study Abroad London Ltd, April 2025

Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that CIEE Study Abroad London Ltd (CIEE London) is making acceptable progress in its continuing management of its responsibilities for academic standards and the management/improvement of the quality of learning opportunities.

Changes since the last QAA review

2 CIEE London has enrolled 577 students on its programmes since the 2024 review. This compares to 566 students recorded in the 2024 review report. In April 2025, there were 63 full-time students on CIEE London's Open Campus and Semester in London programmes, as well as students enrolled directly with its UK university partners (paragraph 5) on programmes in arts and sciences, fashion and business, and fine art, media and communications.

3 CIEE London employs teaching staff for each course it delivers on a contractual, self-employed basis. In April 2025, six teaching staff were employed on courses delivered by CIEE London. Staff who deliver courses at its partner UK universities are employed directly by the universities. Since the review in 2024, a new Centre Director has been appointed and commenced duties in March 2025.

4 In autumn 2024, the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), of which CIEE London is a part, formed a partnership with Dean College in the USA to serve as the School of Record for a new 12-week or semester-long programme delivered by CIEE London for recent high school graduates to begin their university studies in London. This is in addition to CIEE's ongoing partnership with Tulane University in the USA, which serves as the School of Record for CIEE London's Open Campus and internship courses.

5 Since the review in 2024, CIEE has entered into new UK partnerships with University of the Arts London (UAL) and Queen Mary University London (QMUL) to enable CIEE London to deliver four new short programmes and continues to work with the University of Westminster and University College London.

Findings from the monitoring visit

6 The review team found that formal agreements between CIEE and Dean College, and between CIEE and QMUL and UAL set out mutual responsibilities and provide assurance that there are clear processes in place for the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of the student experience, and for the award of grades and credit on the programmes delivered by CIEE London (paragraphs 7 and 8). The good practice identified in the 2024 RSEO review has been maintained. CIEE London continues to provide co-curricular activity which is effective in enhancing programme delivery and the student study experience

(paragraph 9). A range of mechanisms facilitate student feedback on learning resources and the quality of the learning experience and there is evidence that CIEE London continues to engage effectively with student feedback to enhance the student experience (paragraph 10). The March 2024 review report identified one recommendation: that CIEE London formalise the processes and responsibilities for reaching a final agreed grade when second marking is used and clarify the role of external markers. Based on the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team conclude that the recommendation should be set aside and that no further action is required (paragraphs 11-13). CIEE London has continued to improve support, training and development for teaching staff in grading student work and providing feedback since the March 2024 review (paragraph 14).

7 In the autumn of 2024, CIEE London launched the First Year Abroad (FYA) programme in partnership with Dean College, USA. The FYA is a twelve-week programme delivered by CIEE London for recent high school graduates to begin their university studies in London. Dean College serves as the School of Record which is responsible for the setting of academic standards on the FYA programme, and documents and awards credits for eligible students who attend the FYA programme. The details of the partnership are set out clearly in the 2023 Cooperative Academic Agreement. This outlines the mutual responsibilities of Dean College and CIEE London with regard to student selection and admission, orientation and academic tutoring, and the processes that Dean College uses to assure academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience and compliance with its policies and processes, chiefly via annual review scrutiny.

8 During 2024, CIEE extended its collaborations with universities in London for the delivery of courses through entering into agreements with QMUL and with UAL. Senior CIEE London staff who met the review team explained that the rationale for extending CIEE's relationship with UK partners is to provide a wider range of exchange opportunities for visiting students and greater curriculum diversity and specialism through enabling CIEE London students to study undergraduate modules taught by staff at the universities. The terms and conditions of the relationship between CIEE and UAL and QMUL are set out in agreements which describe mutual roles and responsibilities of parties and confirm that UAL and QMUL are ultimately responsible for the academic standards of the courses CIEE London delivers. Student admissions decisions, teaching and assessment, the confirmation of student grades and credits and the production of student transcripts are undertaken by the universities in line with university policies and processes.

9 The March 2024 review report identified two examples of good practice: the subject-related co-curricular activity which is effective in enhancing programme delivery and the student study experience; and the wide range of student feedback opportunities which are responded to in a timely, effective manner. In their meetings with the review team, staff and students described a range of vibrant, distinctive and student-centred activities, events and visits undertaken since the review in 2024. This is supported by documentary evidence of the schedule of activities listed for 2024-25. The CIEE London Director of Student Life organises this programme of activities and supports students to arrange the activities they would like to undertake. Students regard this extra curriculum offer as among the best experiences they have in London and agree that this provides a valuable opportunity for students across the breadth of CIEE London's provision to experience London and other notable UK landmarks, and to socialise with visiting students they would not encounter on their programmes of study.

10 The review team saw evidence demonstrating that CIEE London continues to engage effectively with student feedback. The analysis of student survey evaluations of their courses and programmes are a core tool for CIEE London staff to understand students' experiences on courses and programmes. Minutes from Student Representative Council (SRC) meetings illustrate an active and open dialogue where students express many positive experiences of the programmes and activities, as well as concerns they would like addressed. Representatives from across all of CIEE London's provision are included on the

SRC and students are supportive of the SRC and its role in representing all student voices. The Academic Director and Academic Team are responsible for addressing student concerns and provided examples of where student feedback was addressed directly and promptly.

11 The March 2024 review report identified one desirable recommendation: that CIEE London formalise the processes and responsibilities for reaching a final agreed grade when second marking is used and clarify the role of external markers. The recommendation is made in the context of CIEE London's arrangements to consider student appeals against a grade awarded on programmes taught directly by CIEE London. Appeals against grades awarded on modules taught by CIEE London's UK university partners are managed according to university policies and procedures and these processes did not form part of the 2024 report recommendation.

12 During the monitoring visit and through scrutiny of CIEE London's annual monitoring submission and accompanying evidence detailing policies and processes for managing student appeals, the review team learned that CIEE London does not use second marking or the services of a third marker. This is because appeals against grades are managed centrally within the wider CIEE organisation by the CIEE Registration Coordinator. CIEE London can comment on grade appeals and may be asked to provide documentation and comment but does not coordinate the process, is not involved in decisions, and is not informed of appeal outcomes.

13 The appeal process is detailed in full in both student and staff handbooks which outline the procedure as well as the grounds on which an appeal might be based. There are also clear, transparent and accessible templates to enable a student to make a grade appeal, as well as a pro forma to communicate the formal response to the appeal. The review team were told that grade appeals are rare and that there had only been one appeal at CIEE London since the March 2024 review. On the basis of the evidence considered during the course of the annual monitoring review the review team conclude that the recommendation identified in the March 2024 review report should be set aside because CIEE London is not involved in the CIEE centrally managed grade appeals process and does not use second marking or the services of a third marker in the resolution of student concerns relating to grades/marks.

14 CIEE London does not use external examiners to assure academic standards, in common with US higher education practice, and does not have a formal policy regarding second marking. Nevertheless, there are various ways that CIEE London assures consistency, fairness and quality of marks and feedback. There are detailed and assignment-specific marking criteria and grading descriptors rubrics, which are accessible to both students and teaching staff in their respective handbooks. The Academic Director and Academic team also provide detailed guidance and ongoing support in assessment and feedback for staff. The Academic Director meets individual teachers to review grades and feedback, focusing proportionately on the less experienced members of staff. Since the March 2024 review CIEE London has taken steps to improve support, training and development for teachers through increasing the frequency of faculty meetings to allow a greater number of faculty from across different academic disciplines to attend, exchange ideas and best practices, and providing more extensive guidance on academic best practice and recent trends and challenges in higher education, including, for example, preventing and identifying the use of generative Artificial Intelligence in written academic work. Teaching staff commented positively on the support and guidance they receive for assessing and grading students' work.

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

15 External oversight of CIEE London's academic standards and quality procedures remain under the direction of the CIEE International Programme Advisory Council (IPAC) with accredited courses approved by Tulane University and Dean College. IPAC visited CIEE London in June 2024 for a full programme oversight and review. CIEE London maintains close ties with academic partners in the USA and with UK universities which supports ongoing quality assurance of learning, teaching, assessment, and the student experience. CIEE London employs lecturers with significant and current experience teaching in UK higher education providing opportunities to draw on external experiences, systems and processes, as evidenced in the meeting with staff.

16 The monitoring visit was carried out by Professor Will Curtis, Reviewer, and Dr Judith Foreman, QAA Officer, on 9 April 2025.

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