



Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Bader College (formerly Bader International Study Centre), November 2022

Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that Bader College (formerly Bader International Study Centre) is making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [November 2021 monitoring visit](#).

Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 There have been two major changes since the monitoring visit in November 2021. Bader International Study Centre changed its name to Bader College (the College) on 1 June 2022, following the approval of the Queen's University Board of Trustees based in Ontario, Canada. Notification of the name change was confirmed to QAA at that time. QAA was also informed that the term of office of the Vice-Provost and Executive Director (VPED) had ended and that an interim VPED from Queen's University was in post pending the appointment of the new VPED by the end of September 2022. The review team met the recently-appointed VPED and the interim VPED, and discussed their regular phased meetings and arrangements for full handover in January 2023. There have been no other significant changes to the senior management team since the previous monitoring visit.

3 Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, students attended college programmes remotely from Canada which resulted in larger student cohorts in 2020-21 (154.5) compared to 2019-20 (109). Consequently, the College makes student data comparisons for current year 2021-22 enrolments with the pre-pandemic 2019-20 following the return to UK studies and in-person teaching for all short and semester programmes. The full-time equivalent (FTE) for 2019-20 was 109 and the current 2021-22 figure is 92. The first year programme over 24 weeks recruited strongly with 115 students but there has been a drop in the number of students attending upper year programmes compared to pre-pandemic numbers. Staffing levels were in line with previous years with 24 academic staff and 50 support staff in October 2021.

Findings from the monitoring visit

4 From the Annual Monitoring Return and the comprehensive supporting evidence documentation; the student submission; and remote meetings with the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, Ontario, the new Bader College VPED, the interim VPED, and staff and current students - the team concludes that Bader College has continued to develop the three areas of good practice identified in the full Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight review report and the subsequent annual monitoring report. The November 2021 monitoring report concludes that during the period of remote student learning, necessitated by the UK and Canadian Covid pandemic regulations, the College has effectively maintained academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities. It has supported students to engage with the enhancement of the quality of the learning experience, developed effective internal processes for the monitoring of quality

and standards, and continues to comply with the Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes as its central external reference point.

5 Students returned to the UK for their studies in September 2021 when Bader College implemented permitted travel and vaccination protocols. There were some challenges to programme delivery and student life - for example, travel opportunities in Europe, co-curricular and external events were restricted. Student retention and achievement levels remain high and student satisfaction with their educational experience for individual programmes showed 97% satisfaction. The strong collaboration between the College and Queen's works effectively on student admissions and enrolments through university site visits, joint faculty and staff webinars, the admissions team and the involvement of Bader College student ambassadors.

6 The College has made considerable progress in developing its latest Quality Action Plan - for example, promoting enhancements to student learning opportunities using virtual resources developed for remote learning during the pandemic. The Action Plan includes tracking notes to ensure that delivery of stated quality improvements are transparent. The recently-appointed Director of Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement intends to bring improvements to the social, academic and co-curricular learning opportunities of students. The current objective of the role is to keep the Action Plan under continuous review, working with the Director of Academics, and to focus on making the annual internal monitoring strategy more evidence-based and robust. The interim VPED has developed a draft five-year strategic plan for Bader College - aligned with the Queen's University Strategic Framework - that has the potential for mapping to the relevant Core and Common practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code).

7 Recent enhancements to support the College faculty include the successful implementation of staff restructuring with annual faculty performance reviews to improve staff and faculty retention, an updated peer observation process and improved online support for staff development with Queen's Centre for Teaching and Learning. The College is maintaining and monitoring usage of its comprehensive digitised faculty and employee handbook on the Queen's University platform (OnQ) that encompasses the new Bader College information aligned with the University regulatory frameworks. Bader College is developing faculty research plans to complement teaching and learning.

8 Bader College continues to enhance student representation and additional experiential learning opportunities through the Student Council and other formal and informal feedback mechanisms, to ensure that the student voice is heard throughout each term and responded to effectively. There is an established system of administration to ensure the student satisfaction survey is reported to the Senior Management Team, and includes responses to the student submission by the SMT. The College monitors its equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility agenda that is included in each course syllabus.

9 The College is committed to working effectively with the External Educational Quality Committee (EEQC) to develop its Quality Action Plan. The latest EEQC review made recommendations on the student experience; teaching and learning; the Bader Skills Award; Indigenization - Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism, and Accessibility (I-EDIAA); College connections with the University; and on research integration. The College is continuing to develop responses to the recommendations as part of its strategy for improvement. The EEQC also made particular reference to the 'exemplary manner for infusing teaching and learning' that should be shared with the Queen's campus.

10 The internal monitoring system is embedded in the college processes to support its well-respected study abroad experience for students. The College recognises the current challenges as a small provider based in East Sussex, and in close proximity to large UK

universities. Its location makes the hire and retention of suitably qualified, high-quality faculty a considerable issue. The recent exercise to improve faculty employment contracts and to address problems of high staff turnover is more appropriate to UK higher education, with performance-related progression opportunities. Professional student services staffing has also been restructured with the addition of a Director of Student Experience and Residence Life to oversee effective delivery of pastoral support and health services to students. The new team delivered projects over a six-month period, although the Director did not remain in post and a temporary appointee is currently leading the unit until a replacement is appointed in 2023. Students who met the team expressed their gratitude for the support offered by library and IT staff, as well as faculty, to develop their transferable skills.

11 An ongoing concern for the newly rebranded Bader College is that of underinvestment in the maintenance of the Bader Hall building. Progress was made during the pandemic with physical improvements to student facilities, and the development of the new Bader College website that is appreciated by students. A major enhancement achieved during the pandemic is improved connectivity of digital resources with the Queen's University central IT system with migration of data from the College platform. The positive impact of the new IT system is the access to learning resources and extensive software packages afforded to staff and students, and as a valuable resource for students returning to Queen's programmes.

12 Student support is a continuing strength at Bader College that is valued by students. Students make considerable use of faculty office hours for individual academic support. There are wide-ranging opportunities for the development of skills and curriculum enrichment that are fostered through the Bader Skills Awards (BSA) schemes and the Global Skills Common Purpose project. Students commented favourably on the overall benefits of the opportunity to travel, together with local community volunteering, field trips to sites and museums, and practicums within their courses that enhance their study abroad experiences.

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

13 The academic standards and quality of Bader College programmes are required to comply with Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes that are overseen by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. Courses are approved by the relevant University curriculum committee and faculty board to ensure consistency. The University undertakes regular site visits to monitor all aspects of programme delivery. The EEQC review of the College resumed in June 2022 and its report recommendations are used to develop the detailed Quality Action Plan. An external international audit by the International Association of Universities (IAU) has also recently taken place as part of a wider Queen's University audit, and is expected to report by December 2022.

14 The Bader College Quality Action Plan expresses the intention to engage with the Core and Common practices of the Quality Code as a reference point. The recent draft Strategic Plan by the interim VPED identifies policies and procedures aligned to those of Queen's University for further development and consultation with staff for mapping to the Quality Code.

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 Elizabeth Briggs, Reviewer, and Dr Margaret Johnson, QAA Officer, on 22 November 2022.

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