



Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight: desk-based analysis of Bader International Study Centre, November 2021

Outcome of the desk-based analysis

1 From the annual return and documentary evidence, the monitoring team concludes that the Bader International Study Centre (BISC) is continuing to maintain academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities since the [November 2020 Review](#).

Changes since the last QAA review

2 There have been no major changes since the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight (RSEO) review in November 2020.

3 During 2020-21 fall, winter and summer terms, students attended the BISC courses remotely from Canada and consequently numbers increased over this period, as students who would not have been able to travel to the UK participated in the courses online. For 2020-21, the total full-time equivalent figure was 154.5, compared to 109 in 2019-20.

4 The Bachelor of Health Sciences was delivered for the first time during 2020-21, and a further 47 Health Sciences students will participate in the programme this academic year. Two professors from the Faculty of Health Sciences on the Kingston campus will be travelling to BISC for winter 2022 to deliver two of the Health Sciences courses.

5 The number of academic staff has increased from 22 in November 2020 to 24 in October 2021. The number of non-academic staff has decreased from 53 in November 2020 to 50 in 2021, due to some restructuring of the administrative office.

6 A new appointment has been made - Experiential Learning and Workplace Skills Coordinator (Learning Technology) - to help embed technology into the curriculum and to support students and staff with online learning.

7 An Acting Director of Student Enrolment Services has been appointed who has recruited a professional student services team to support students in their return to learning on the campus.

Findings from the monitoring visit

8 From the detailed Annual Monitoring Return, the 104 pieces of evidence submitted, the student submission and the responses to the additional information requests, the team concludes that BISC has continued to maintain academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities. BISC has built on the good practice identified in the QAA report, published in February 2021 (paragraphs 9-12), supported students to engage with the enhancement of the quality of the learning experience (paragraphs 13 and 14), developed effective internal processes for the monitoring of quality and standards (paragraphs 15-18), and continues to comply with the Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes - their main external reference point (paragraphs 20 and 21).

9 The report for the RSEO which began in June 2020 and was completed in November 2020, identifies three areas of good practice and makes no formal recommendations. BISC has continued to build on the areas of good practice by supporting faculty, offering further training opportunities and enhancing the curriculum with online learning opportunities.

10 The orientation process for new faculty is now managed by the Academic Administrator to ensure that information is provided in a consistent and timely format. The Faculty Professional Development Hub on Microsoft Teams provides opportunities for all faculty to develop new teaching and learning practices and to become familiar with online pedagogies and technologies. Although BISC intends to return to face-to-face learning in the current term, it will continue to support faculty with course development and technology integration.

11 Virtual Experiential Learning Opportunities (VELOs) have been further enhanced to mitigate against the detrimental effects of the pandemic which have curtailed, and may continue to prevent, external visits. Students are able to access archives and museums online and will participate in trips to more local venues. An Experiential Learning and Workplace Skills Coordinator has been appointed to support faculty in embedding experiential learning into the curriculum. A calendar of Experiential Learning Opportunities has been developed.

12 The faculty training day in August facilitated both online and physical attendance to enable staff from more remote locations to participate and this model will be continued throughout the academic year. Part of the objectives of the training day was to encourage the enhancement of the curriculum through experiential learning.

13 Although courses were delivered remotely during 2020-21, BISC established an online student community which enabled students to continue to engage with each other and to form a Student Government. The students submitted a report for this review which outlines some of the work and successes of the group. This includes publication of a year book, the provision of training for future student members, regular meetings with the BISC Leadership Team, as well as the development of a social media platform. The student report comments favourably on the student learning experience across all courses. A further report was submitted by Student Services providing advice and guidance for future student representatives.

14 Feedback from students via the Queen's Survey of Student Experience of Teaching (QSSET) (winter 2021) is positive with scores for each course over 4 (out of 5). One course received poor feedback regarding the tutor, which was acted upon, and there is no evidence that student grades were affected.

15 BISC has developed its own internal quality monitoring processes which are overseen by the BISC Educational Standards Committee (ESC). The ESC replaces the BISC Curriculum Committee and has clearly defined terms of reference which include the cyclical review of quality and standards, curriculum design, developing pedagogy and sharing best practice. The Committee meets four times a year, but the frequency of meetings has yet to be included in the terms of reference.

16 The External Educational Quality Committee (EEQC) normally visits BISC each year to review academic quality assurance matters. Due to the travel restrictions imposed by Covid, and as all courses were run remotely, the EEQC was not able to visit BISC during 2020-21. However, informal discussions on quality assurance have continued throughout the academic year and an EEQC site visit is planned for the 2021-22 academic year.

17 The outcomes of all external and internal reviews are contained in a detailed action plan which is monitored by the ESC. This includes responses to student feedback, monitoring of the assessment process and the implementation of the Queen's Survey of Student Experience of Teaching. BISC has also developed an action plan timeline to monitor progress with the action plan. A summary action plan has been published on the website. BISC has effectively used the 2020-21 academic year, when students were learning remotely, to address some critical comments regarding maintenance of accommodation and the lack of suitable study areas. Some redecoration has taken place and an area has been identified for refurbishment as a study space. Further work to enhance outdoor exercise opportunities is planned for the academic year 2021-22.

18 The embedding of an assessment table in the digital syllabus template helps to ensure that, when writing assessments, staff identify learning outcomes and provide clear guidelines to students on how to submit their assignments. Examples of best practice in relation to assessment are circulated to staff via emails from the Deputy Academic Director. Staff are also able to attend drop-in sessions and have access to the Queen's University Centre for Learning and Teaching training events and workshops.

19 As this is a study abroad programme there is no data on student progression.

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

20 The key external reference point for BISC is the Queen's University Quality Assurance Process which is overseen by the Higher Education Quality Council in Ontario. These systems are similar to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and provide advice and guidance on the continual enhancement of the curriculum. The Educational Standards Committee draws attention to the Quality Code. During 2022, BISC intends to embed the Core and Common practices of the Quality Code into its policies to provide a further reference point for the Educational Standards Committee to refer to during the cyclical review of quality.

21 Faculty effectively use their links with the main university campus to develop the curriculum and share best practice. It is anticipated that this will lead to the approval of two new BISC courses in 2022-23. BISC continues to be part of the Matariki Network of Universities which, through the Common Purpose Global Citizen Programme, will enable students to engage with others at partner universities via a virtual student exchange. Faculty have remained research active during the pandemic, enabling them to share their work through online events. A Research Coordinator has been appointed from September 2021 to further strengthen external collaboration.

Background to the desk-based analysis

22 The desk-based analysis 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/annual monitoring. 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 process or review.

23 The desk-based analysis was carried out by Brenda Eade, Reviewer, and Nadine Baker, QAA Officer, in November 2021. No meetings were held with students or staff, and the conclusions presented in this report are based on the analysis of documentary evidence submitted by the provider.

QAA2640 - R13169 - Jan 22

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2022
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel 01452 557000
Web www.qaa.ac.uk