



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of British Institute of Technology Ltd, November 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 British Institute of Technology Ltd (the Institute) (formerly known as the British Institute of Technology and E-commerce Ltd) has made acceptable progress with implementing the action plan resulting from the October 2015 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 At the time of this monitoring visit, the Institute is undergoing a period of transition. Currently, there are no students, although the next applicants have been interviewed and interim offers made, pending imminent final checks by the degree-awarding body. Awarding bodies/organisations have changed. The only remaining degree-awarding organisation is the European University College of Business, formerly Poznan University College of Business, Poland (EUCB), through which the Institute offers a BA (Hons) Business Top-up. The Institute is about to finalise new programmes with an additional partner, London Metropolitan University: BA (Hons) Business Administration, BA (Hons) Business Administration Top-up, MSc Information Technology (Distance Learning), BSc (Hons) Business Information Technology and MPhil/PhD Work Psychology. A validation meeting was held on 24 June 2016 with London Metropolitan University for the proposed new franchised degree programmes. A draft agreement has been produced, which is to be signed imminently.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The Institute has made acceptable progress on the recommendations in the 2015 Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers). The Institute has maintained the area of good practice and demonstrated good progress with the recommendations, with further work to do in some areas - however, some relate to programmes with awarding partners that are no longer offered.

4 The wide-ranging and effective opportunities provided to students to develop their employment skills continue to be good practice, with plans in place to extend this when working with London Metropolitan University. The Institute has good links with employers and its alumni, and these links are used to inform programme design and the career progression of students. The Institute has consulted with the Industry Advisory Board and Council in the development of new provision with London Metropolitan University to ensure the development of employability skills. There are plans to involve alumni in mentoring schemes.

5 The EUCB has ultimate responsibility for academic awards, and the Institute applies the regulations of this awarding organisation alongside an Institute quality assurance process, which responds to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). The Institute, together with EUCB, develops the student handbook; ultimately, however, the awarding organisation has responsibility for overseeing the accuracy of the handbook.

6 Among the recommendations from the 2015 report, three specifically relate to the management of Pearson awards, now no longer part of the Institute's portfolio of programmes. One of these refers to the identification of student support. The Institute has introduced a number of initiatives to improve the identification of student support needs, including involving lecturers in admissions and compulsory academic skills workshops. A learning support section on the virtual learning environment is available to students. The specific provision of support for students within the Institute is limited, although there are referrals to other agencies. Examples of students commenting favourably about student support have been seen. Proposals for the provision of the accommodation of specific learning needs of students with disabilities was set as a condition by London Metropolitan University as part of the Institutional Approval event.

7 In response to the other two recommendations, the Institute has undertaken a review of its record keeping and has now merged its admissions and administration departments, with stricter controls on student completion data to improve the handling of student records. There is now a systematic method for communicating assessment outcomes to students.

8 Students enrolled on Staffordshire University programmes were formally notified in writing about the closure of their courses in November 2015. The partnership continued to support remaining students through to the completion of their programmes. The remaining three chose to complete at level 5, with a 240-credit award. This partnership will conclude with the final issuing of awards to these students who have now completed.

9 The Admissions Policy references the Equal Opportunities Policy and Disabilities Policy to underpin the principles of fair admission. Candidates complete an Institute admission form, language test and have an interview with an academic member of staff.

10 English language requirements are specified for all programmes, and applicants' English language qualifications and certification are checked. While students must meet the minimum level of English competency stated for their programme, the Institute also offers additional classes, available to all students, on the use of English for academic purposes along with a handbook. This includes academic writing, essay structuring, referencing, verbal and group presentations, and dissertation proposals.

11 Applicants are interviewed by an academic member of staff at the Institute, or, in exceptional circumstances, online, in a way that their identification can be checked. If the applicant's response to questions does not correspond to their certificated level of English they are given a written test according to their level of study. The interview process includes close questioning of the applicant's motivation for studying and their choice of programme, as well as the identification of the need for specific support.

12 Prior qualifications are reviewed and assessed in relation to the programme applied for. Overseas qualifications are checked with the National Academic Recognition Information Centre database and their equivalence assessed to check that they are valid for entry onto Institute programmes. The Institute operates a Recognition of Prior Learning Scheme.

13 For London Metropolitan University programmes, the admissions process is the responsibility of the University, which oversees all student applications in the first year.

14 Prior to the monitoring visit, information on the Institute website regarding the programme offer was incorrect. At the visit, the website was not available owing to circumstances beyond the Institute's control. The Institute is aware of, and is addressing, the issue.

15 The Institute has sound processes for the monitoring and review of programmes. There are programme committees in place for all provision. These review a wide range of aspects of the programme. All programmes are monitored annually, and annual monitoring reports are produced for consideration at Institute committees. An overarching report is produced that constructs an overall view of all annual monitoring reports. The Quality Assurance Handbook provides an overview of the quality system. Observation of teaching supports the evaluation of the delivery of the Learning and Teaching Strategy and identifies good practice for dissemination through continuing professional development.

16 Students are well represented throughout the Institute. All programmes have Programme Meetings, with student representatives able to provide feedback and question lecturers and programme leaders. In addition, anonymous student feedback reports are completed, and considered by programme managers in summative reports. The Student President attends the Academic Board, which monitors and reviews programmes. The Student President and student representatives meet the Principal for informal programme feedback.

17 As mentioned, there are currently no students enrolled at the Institute. The only programme that continues to be offered is the EUCB BA (Hons) Business Top-up. The most recent cohort had a retention rate of 83 per cent; of the remaining five students, four were successful.

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

18 The Institute has mapped its policies, procedures and programmes to the Quality Code and has drawn up a comprehensive action plan in order to continue to improve its practice. The proposed franchised degree programmes with London Metropolitan University have already been mapped to the Quality Code by the University.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

19 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.

20 The monitoring visit was carried out by Professor Jenny Anderson, Reviewer, and Dr Heather Barrett-Mold, Coordinator, on 9 November 2016.

QAA1783 - R6146 - Dec 16

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2016
Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557050
Website: www.qaa.ac.uk