



Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of the British Institute of Technology Ltd, October 2018

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) is making acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [October 2017 annual monitoring visit](#).

2 Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 The Institute is based in Stratford, East London and currently offers a BA programme in Business Administration, with 70 students, and a BSc in Business IT with three students all of whom are in their third year at the Institute completing level 6. There has been no recruitment for two years due to a change of policy at the awarding body, London Metropolitan University (LMU). A new partnership has been formed with the University of West London (UWL) with a number of programmes validated and due to run from January 2019. This recruitment is dependent on the Institute's registration with the Office for Students, which is pending. At the time of the 2017 monitoring there were no enrolments with the European University of Business (EUoB) but now there are six students on the MBA and nine students on the HE Foundation programme. There are currently 27 members of staff at the Institute.

3 Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The Institute is making acceptable progress in implementing its own action plans arising from the Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) in October 2015 and the annual monitoring visits in October 2016 and 2017. It is continuing to maintain academic standards and learning opportunities.

4 Good practice continues with opportunities provided to students to develop their employment skills. Some recommendations from the 2015 review no longer apply due to changes to programmes offered and to partner awarding bodies and organisations. As noted in earlier annual monitoring reports, the Institute has incorporated the actions to apply to its current programmes (see paragraphs 5, 6 and 7).

5 Handbooks have been updated, policies disseminated and record keeping strengthened. Some recommendations from 2015 related to the programmes validated by the European University College of Business (EUCB), formerly Poznan University, Poland. Actions to meet the recommendations, include revising the student handbook and incorporating the EUCB programmes into the quality processes and structures of the Institute. Admissions information is now included in the EUCB handbooks, revised since the previous visit, and quality procedures apply across Institute provision.

6 Improved teaching, learning and assessment practice are clear priorities for the Institute's own action plan. Actions include sessions for students to improve their presentations, digital skills, note taking and report writing. Peer and management

observation of teaching facilitates sharing good practice and informs monthly staff continuing professional development (CPD) sessions. Staff are encouraged to vary their teaching methods and to provide class revision of previous lectures to test understanding. Staff and students recognise the significant contribution made to teaching and learning through increased and more effective use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) and its analytical tools. Students met by the team praise the extensive and readily available support provided by staff, which allows them to succeed in their studies.

7 The Institute continues to use its strong links to the business community particularly through its Industry and Business Advisory Board to support the vocational focus of its programme offer, and to support the employability of its graduates. Students recognised the benefits of a practical curriculum in support of their career aspirations. Staff research and CPD inform teaching and learning with students confirming the beneficial impact on their classroom experience. Plans to introduce a new foundation degree to provide practical work-based learning have not developed through the new partnership with UWL, although approval of a new BA Fashion and Textiles provides the opportunity to extend the Institute's vocational portfolio.

8 The admissions system is effective and designed to attract students from under-represented groups and non-traditional learners. A recently revised Admissions Policy informs the process. The only students admitted since the 2017 annual monitoring are part-time self-funded students comprising six on the MBA programme and nine on the foundation programme. All students receive an interview with appropriately trained members of academic and admissions staff. The 2017 report noted that interview records contain little evaluative evidence, do not require the interviewer to state their assessment of the applicant's commitment to study, or give full reasons for their interview decision. Revised interview records remedy the situation providing judgements from academic as well as admissions staff, but although the interview process is extensive the record remains brief. In addition to appropriate qualifications, an English language test provides further confirmation of the applicant's ability and prospective support needs. Since the 2017 monitoring, entry requirements are now clearly stated in programme documentation and online. Prior learning and experience is recognised through appropriate processes. Checks by LMU on student qualifications and claims for advanced standing provide a further level of security to the admissions process. Students confirmed the admissions processes to be fair and effective, allowing them to make informed choices about their study.

9 Comprehensive assessment regulations and procedures, including those for academic misconduct, inform and regulate the assessment process. Formative and online multiple-choice exercises provide students with useful preparation for the summative tasks, which take a variety of forms. Students and external moderators confirm that the Institute uses a wide variety of assessments including examinations, portfolios, presentations and group work, to enable students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. Sample summative assignment briefs contain clear tasks and marking criteria although without reference to the module learning outcomes. Extensive procedures to avoid academic misconduct include varied assignment design, group work and presentations, training students in correct referencing, and requiring written submissions to include plagiarism-detection reports. A detailed and high-quality leaflet underpins the approach to academic misconduct. The awarding body, LMU, checks assignments before issue and samples the completed work which is first and second marked by Institute staff. Students state that formative feedback is particularly valuable, and that summative assessment is prompt and allows them to improve.

10 The Institute uses data to inform its actions and recognises the need for improving student attendance and assignment submission. Staff provided examples of using data to identify and support specific groups within the student body. However, changes to

programmes and validating partners prevents identification of clear long-term trends in retention and achievement. From a small cohort of students in 2015-16 the Institute had 120 students on the LMU BA (Hons) Business Administration (Top-up) programme, 92 on the BA level 4 and seven students on the BSc (Hons) Business IT Information Technology in 2016-17. Retention on these programmes was 85, 86 and 71 per cent respectively. Achievement for the BA top up was 57 per cent with those not achieving the full award leaving with exit awards. Although the LMU pre-exam board for level 5 in July 2018 noted some non-attendance and non-submission the results for 2017-18 show 70 out of 79 BA level 5 students progressing to level 6, and all three BSc students progressing following resit boards. This cohort entered in 2016 with 92 BA students and 7 BSc students resulting in a 76 and 42 per cent retention rate respectively.

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

11 As noted by the previous annual monitoring reports the Institute's policies and programmes are mapped against the Quality Code and other appropriate external reference points. The validation of programmes with a new awarding body demonstrates a thorough application of appropriate Subject Benchmark Statements and of the FHEQ. The Institute's Council and Industry and Business Advisory Board provide the Institute with external advice and guidance to inform strategic and curriculum developments maintaining the strong links between the Institute and the business community.

5 Background to the monitoring visit

12 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.

13 The monitoring visit was carried out by Dr Glenn Barr, Reviewer, and Mr Millard Parkinson, QAA Officer, on 16 October 2018.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel 01452 557050
Web www.qaa.ac.uk