



This review method
is ESG compliant

Educational Oversight Review

IFSA UK Limited

March 2026

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About this review

This is a report of an Educational Oversight Review (EOR) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at IFSA UK Limited.

EOR consists of a number of components. The Core component is a review of a provider's arrangements for maintaining the academic standards and quality of the courses it offers against nine of the Sector-Agreed Principles contained within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2024) (the UK Quality Code). This subset of Principles has been mapped to the core requirements that have been set out by the Home Office in relation to educational oversight. Further information about the Core component of EOR can be found in the [Educational Oversight Review Guidance for Providers](#).

The review took place on 10 March 2026 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- John Byrom (Reviewer)
- Inna Pomorina (Reviewer)
- Kikelomo Ladipo (Student reviewer)

The QAA Officer for this review was Monika Ruthe.

In Educational Oversight Review (Core component) the QAA review team:

- determines an outcome against a subset of the Sector-Agreed Principles outlined in the UK Quality Code
- identifies features of good practice
- makes recommendations
- sets conditions (where relevant)
- identifies areas of enhancement activity
- determines an overall judgement as to whether the provider meets the Home Office's quality assurance requirements for educational oversight.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission. A dedicated section explains the method for [Educational Oversight Review](#) and has links to other informative documents. QAA reviews are evidence-based processes. Review judgements result from the documents review teams see, and the meetings they hold, and draw upon their experience as peer reviewers and student reviewers.

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) provide the framework for internal and external quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. QAA's review methods are [compliant with these standards](#), as are the [reports we publish](#). More information is available on [our website](#).

This review was conducted in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)

Executive summary

The Institute for Study Abroad UK Limited (IFSA UK) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Institute for Study Abroad Incorporated (IFSA Inc) a not for profit institution based in Indiana in the United States of America (USA). IFSA UK is registered in the UK as a private limited company. Although it does not generate profit, it is technically structured to do so in the UK. The provider's premises are in Mayfair, central London.

The IFSA Inc. mission is 'to create global learning environments that help students foster the critical perspectives, knowledge, and skills they need to thrive'. This mission is delivered through the vision, that 'with the right preparation and encouragement, young people can use their study abroad experiences to enrich their own lives, their communities, and the world we share with meaningful contributions'. IFSA Inc is committed to intercultural agility, individualised learning, inclusive excellence, and enduring impact. Key challenges in delivering its mission and vision relate to a decline in the college-age population in the USA, a very competitive and saturated market, financial risk aversion, ongoing global disruptions, and disruptions in US higher education.

The IFSA Inc. provision is overseen by its US partnering school of record, Butler University. IFSA UK offers a range of semester-long (IFSA-designed programmes) as study abroad opportunities, primarily for students at universities based in the USA. These Study in London programmes have British Accreditation Council (BAC) accreditation and focus on arts and humanities, business, bioscience, health sciences, computer science, and psychology. The latest addition to the UK academic portfolio is two IFSA-designed career accelerator programmes in health sciences and biosciences which combine academic learning with experiential learning and the development of employability skills. All programmes are designed to meet US degree requirements and students can select four to five modules for a total of 12-17 US semester credit hours. They may also opt to take one elective at the University of Westminster or Queen Mary, University of London for a supplemental fee. In addition, IFSA UK offers study opportunities (partnership programmes) and summer modules at UK universities in various locations in England, Wales and Scotland.

In 2025 there were 47 students on IFSA-designed programmes and 347 participants studied on partnership programmes at different UK universities and colleges with teaching provided by the host institutions. At the time of the review (spring 2026 semester) there were 30 students on IFSA-designed programmes and 189 students on partnership programmes. In 2025 the students on IFSA-designed programmes were taught by 14 teaching staff and in the spring 2026 semester there were 17 teaching staff. In addition, there are 12 programme management and student support staff for all UK provision.

In reaching conclusions about the extent to which the Institute for Study Abroad UK Limited (IFSA UK) meets the Sector-Agreed Principles, the QAA review team followed the evidence-based review procedure as outlined in the guidance for Educational Oversight Review (July 2024). IFSA UK provided the review team with a self-evaluation and supporting evidence. During the review visit, which took place on 10 March 2026, the review team held a total of four meetings with programme management staff, academic staff and professional support staff, and students. In summary, the team identified three recommendations.

Conclusions

The QAA review team reached the following conclusions about the higher education provision at the Institute for Study Abroad UK Limited.

The QAA review team determines that the Institute for Study Abroad UK Limited:

- **meets** the Home Office's Quality assurance requirements for educational oversight.

Recommendations

The QAA review team makes the following **recommendations** for development and enhancement:

- Consider offering further pedagogic professional development opportunities for teaching staff (Principle 11).
- Further strengthening the IFSA Forum for Students to ensure that all voices are heard (Principle 10).
- In respect of IFSA-designed provision consider developing a standardised approach to the presentation of all assessment and marking information (Principle 11).

These recommendations do not impact on each Sector-Agreed Principle being met.

Financial sustainability, management and governance

The financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) check has been **satisfactorily** completed. The outcome of the FSMG check for the **institution** is that **no** material issues were identified.

Explanation of the findings – Sector-Agreed Principles

Principle 1: Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards

Providers demonstrate they have a strategic approach to securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality that is embedded across the organisation.

Findings

1 IFSA Inc. demonstrates a strategic approach to securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality through a comprehensive quality assurance framework. This framework is codified in the Academic Manual, which outlines policies, processes, and standards for all IFSA-designed programmes, thus helping to ensure consistency across provision and delivery locations. The manual is complemented by a range of quality policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Through these mechanisms IFSA UK is apprised of what it needs to do to maintain academic standards and quality for the programmes it delivers.

2 As the credit awarding body, Butler University in the USA is responsible for setting academic standards for IFSA-designed programmes. The relationship is governed by a range of agreements with IFSA Inc. All IFSA-designed programmes are approved by its Curriculum Committee. The management of academic standards and quality at IFSA Inc. is supported by a Strategic Advisory Council which engages experienced academic leaders in a formal advisory capacity. The Council's role is to ensure that strategic decisions regarding programme design, delivery, and enhancement are informed by sector best practices and external perspectives but does not extend to the oversight of quality and standards which rests with the Executive Team. The Letter of Understanding signed by members indicates that the Council is composed of those typically employed in US educational settings and sample minutes provided show that programme management, development, partnerships and assessment are within the Council's remit. In addition, the IFSA Inc. Development Partner Programme engages staff from US higher education institutions as partners in programme design, thus assuring the review team of appropriate use of externality in programme development. Oversight of quality matters is through tactical and strategic reports which are considered by the Executive Team. For partnership programmes delivered by UK host institutions, responsibility for the setting and maintenance of academic standards and quality rests with the host institution.

3 The strategic approach to programme development aligns with IFSA Inc. policies and practices on equity, equality, diversity and inclusion for students because IFSA Inc. welcomes students from all backgrounds and offers a range of study abroad grants. Its commitment to 'inclusive excellence' is underpinned by a Roadmap for Learning which provides individualised student support through its Appreciative Advising Framework and offers a range of community-based learning and extra-curricular activities which are designed to help to foster equity, equality, diversity and inclusion for students. Inclusion is also integral to programme design. For example, newly developed modules run at IFSA UK include elements to raise awareness of identity, power, and privilege (e.g. Black History and Influence).

4 The review team investigated how the IFSA Inc. strategic approach to setting and

maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality is embedded at IFSA UK. In relation to the setting of academic standards the team found that IFSA UK staff may participate in the development of IFSA-designed programmes (see paragraph 27). Butler University, as the credit awarding body, reviews the syllabus of these programmes and approves the programmes via its Curriculum Committee. Evidence indicates dialogue between IFSA Inc. and the credit awarding organisation relating to the approval of syllabi supported by oral testimony concerning the use of software to track related issues, such as the approval of reading lists. Academic standards are maintained through the implementation of key IFSA Inc. academic policies such as the Academic Integrity Policy and the Feedback and Complaints Policy in the various delivery locations, including the UK. A system demonstration during the review visit provided evidence of how these policies are being appropriately implemented by IFSA UK.

5 Quality at IFSA Inc. is assured and enhanced through mechanisms such as voluntary post-arrival, mid-term and end of programme surveys with completion highly encouraged (see paragraph 21) and location-based student fora (see paragraph 49) which feed into structured organisational reports. While annual strategic reports largely relate to global student demographics and evaluations, quarterly tactical reports contain data specific to IFSA UK (alongside other delivery centres) on IFSA-designed programmes and partnership provision. Data in these tactical reports are wide-ranging, covering all stages of the student journey from pre-arrival through to post-programme evaluation; whilst also including non-academic aspects such as housing and extra-curricular activities. The examples seen by the review team evidence a thorough approach to the assurance of quality and the enhancement of the student experience. Examining the use IFSA UK makes of tactical reports, the review team found that these are regularly considered by IFSA UK staff and that the 'next steps' indicated in the reports which need to be put into place as a result of the feedback analysed in the reports is utilised by IFSA UK to ensure issues relevant to its provision are followed up appropriately through an action tracker. This indicated to the review team that IFSA UK ensures that findings from reports are acted upon. All of the above confirmed that the organisation-wide mechanisms for the maintenance of quality are fully embedded at IFSA UK and operate satisfactorily.

6 Overall, the review team concluded that the IFSA Inc. strategic approach to securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality is fully embedded at IFSA UK and operates as intended. The strategic approach is supported by a governance framework and aligns with IFSA Inc.'s policies and practices on equality, diversity and inclusion. External expertise is part of the strategic approach to managing quality and standards. IFSA UK, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 3: Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience

Providers plan, secure and maintain resources relating to learning, technology, facilities and staffing to enable the delivery and enhancement of an accessible, innovative and high-quality learning experience for students that aligns with the provider's strategy and the composition of the student body.

Findings

7 IFSA UK appropriately plans, secures and maintains resources relating to learning, technology, facilities and staffing to ensure that students studying in the UK have access to appropriate learning resources, academic guidance and pastoral support during their study abroad experience. These arrangements operate within the organisational framework

of IFSA Inc., which provides infrastructure, policies and operational support for the programmes. Resources available to IFSA UK students, therefore, reflect both local provisions delivered by IFSA UK and organisational systems provided by the parent organisation IFSA Inc.

8 Within IFSA UK, resource planning focuses primarily on staffing, student support provision and access to learning resources required for programme delivery. Evidence indicates that resource needs are reviewed each semester, with the Director England and Wales Programmes and the senior team considering programme requirements and student feedback when identifying resource priorities. Where additional resources are required, requests may be escalated to the organisational leadership within IFSA Inc. IFSA UK staff reported that recent changes to staffing structures, including the introduction of an Academic Programme Coordinator role and adjustments to enrolment support roles, were implemented in response to evolving programme needs and student demand and have had a positive impact on the student experience.

9 The learning environment available to students varies according to the type of programme in which they are enrolled. Students participating in partnership programmes at UK host universities have access to their teaching facilities, libraries and academic services under formal agreements with IFSA Inc. Students undertaking IFSA-designed programmes are taught at the premises of the provider in central London which has sufficient teaching, learning and social spaces. IFSA UK strives to create a safe and supportive learning environment which is supported by a range of health and safety policies (including on sexual misconduct, relationship violence and stalking; emergency response and crisis management) and identity resources. These are easily accessible on the IFSA UK website. In addition, health, safety, and wellbeing protocols including housing vetting and critical incident response plans help to ensure student and staff wellbeing. IFSA UK also provides inclusive resources and structured support for students with disabilities or additional learning needs on IFSA-designed programmes (see paragraph 46).

10 Digital learning resources to support programme delivery and learning in the form of a learning management system are accessible by all students on IFSA-designed programmes. Students have access course materials through the platform and receive programme information and academic guidance through IFSA UK systems. Students confirmed that programme materials and course communications are easily accessible.

11 IFSA UK has sufficiently large, dedicated staff resources to support the delivery of its programmes. In the spring semester of 2026, it employed 17 part-time teaching staff to teach the 30 students on IFSA-designed programmes. In addition, students on both IFSA-designed and partnership programmes have access to eight full-time staff in England and Wales and four in Scotland. This resource includes a Student Experience Manager and six Student Experience Coordinators to support the wellbeing of students. Teaching staff delivering IFSA-designed programmes are recruited according to criteria outlined in the IFSA Inc. Academic Manual. Staff CVs show that they are drawn from a range of academic and practitioner backgrounds depending on the objectives of individual courses, with many holding PhDs and higher professional qualifications.

12 IFSA UK regularly monitors the effectiveness of the learning environments and resources with student input through mid-term and end of programme evaluations and the England and Wales Student Forum. From the 2025 forum minutes provided students did not raise any facilities or learning resource issues.

13 Overall, the review team concluded that IFSA UK maintains and monitors appropriate resources, staffing arrangements and student support mechanisms that enable the delivery of its programmes. These arrangements operate effectively within the wider framework of

IFSA Inc. and in collaboration with host institutions where partnership programmes are delivered. While some resourcing decisions are taken at organisational level within IFSA Inc., local resource planning processes allow IFSA UK to respond to identified needs. The arrangements support the delivery of a high-quality learning experience. Overall, IFSA UK, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 4: Using data to inform and evaluate quality

Providers collect, analyse and utilise qualitative and quantitative data at provider, departmental, programme and module levels. These analyses inform decision-making with the aim of enhancing practices and processes relating to teaching, learning and the wider student experience.

Findings

14 IFSA Inc. employs an evidence-based approach to the evaluation and enhancement of quality. Data collection and reporting processes are set out within organisational policies and procedures, including the Academic Manual and related operational documentation which show clear departmental roles and SOPs ensure that specialised datasets (academic quality, health/safety, operational KPIs) are collected consistently, analysed centrally, and used locally to enhance teaching, learning and the student experience.

15 IFSA UK aligns with the wider organisational approach to the collection, analysis and data management to support programme monitoring and enhancement. While the approach provides a structured framework for data collection and analysis, the review team found that data analysis is primarily conducted at IFSA Inc., with IFSA UK focusing on interpretation and local application of findings rather than undertaking independent analysis. However, the approach enables timely identification of issues and quick adjustments to programme content and delivery by IFSA UK and informs programme enhancement.

16 IFSA Inc. collects a range of qualitative and quantitative data across the student journey, including pre-arrival surveys, orientation evaluations and mid-term and end-of-programme evaluations. These instruments capture student feedback on teaching, academic support, programme organisation and the wider student experience. Analysis of data is undertaken centrally by the IFSA Inc. research team, whose members have expertise in analysing student feedback within the study abroad sector. IFSA UK staff indicated that access to data systems is controlled and that training is required for staff involved in handling and analysing data. Data protection and management processes are managed by IFSA Inc. with responsibility for ensuring compliance with relevant data protection legislation resting at organisational level.

17 The outcomes of data analysis from student feedback are presented through organisational reporting mechanisms, including tactical reports focused on KPIs and operational improvements, and strategic reports that consider longer-term trends across programmes. The reports are disseminated across the organisation, including to IFSA UK staff. The review team confirmed that IFSA UK staff engage with evaluation findings relevant to UK provision and contribute to discussions regarding programme performance and potential improvements. IFSA UK staff reported that both quantitative indicators and qualitative feedback are considered when identifying areas for enhancement. Courses receiving evaluation scores below defined thresholds trigger follow-up actions, and qualitative feedback is used to contextualise the results. For example, feedback from students regarding the content and expectations of a leadership module, as part of a career

accelerator programme led to adjustments to the course structure and teaching activities. Similarly, student feedback has informed operational decisions such as changes to accommodation providers where concerns were identified. Both examples indicate a desire to enhance practices and processes relating to teaching, learning and the wider student experience using data.

18 In addition to evaluation data, IFSA Inc. monitors application and enrolment trends to inform programme planning and delivery at the various delivery locations. Historical data are used to determine course offerings and programme viability, while application trends are monitored during recruitment cycles to identify programmes at risk of under- or over-enrolment, so students can be advised appropriately towards alternatives and backup applications.

19 Overall, the review team concludes that IFSA Inc. collects and analyses a range of relevant quantitative and qualitative data relating to programme performance and the student experience. These data are disseminated across the organisation, enabling IFSA UK to review outcomes and implement improvements where appropriate. The arrangements support the effective use of data to inform decision-making and enhance the student experience at IFSA UK. IFSA UK, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 5: Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision

Providers regularly monitor and review their provision to secure academic standards and enhance quality. Deliberate steps are taken to engage and involve students, staff and external expertise in monitoring and evaluation activity. The outcomes and impact of these activities are considered at provider level to drive reflection and enhancement across the provider.

Findings

20 IFSA Inc. regularly monitors and reviews its academic provision with IFSA UK participating in a multi-layered organisational framework for monitoring and evaluating programme provision established and coordinated by IFSA Inc. This framework incorporates the evaluation of a range of qualitative and quantitative data and internal quality monitoring reporting processes. The Academic Manual codifies the expectations and ensures a common approach to monitoring and evaluation. UK-specific staff manuals and handbooks enable IFSA UK to implement the monitoring and evaluation arrangements for its provision.

21 Monitoring and review activities are informed primarily by evaluation data. Deliberate steps are taken to involve students in monitoring activities because feedback is collected throughout the student lifecycle through structured mechanisms. IFSA UK students reported that they are informed about opportunities to participate in feedback activities during orientation and throughout the programme and confirmed that they are often asked to contribute feedback on their teaching and learning experiences. IFSA UK staff stated that there are organisational KPIs in place for participation rates. Evidence confirms that student feedback at IFSA UK is captured regularly through online forms, including at the mid-point of a module to enable in-session changes to be made which allows timely identification of issues and recognition of effective practices. IFSA UK staff reported that they are informed of feedback expectations via the Instructor Handbook and as part of their onboarding process.

22 While student feedback is analysed centrally in the US, results are made available to IFSA UK. The outcomes are reported through tactical and strategic reports, which identify strengths, areas for improvement and associated action points for all IFSA-designed provision. IFSA UK staff are involved in monitoring of the academic provision through discussions of items from those reports such as programme performance and consideration of possible enhancements in relation to programmes delivered in the UK. The Academic Programmes Manager and tutors review it and identify possible suggestions for enhancement which in the case of a Microbiology module led to suggested changes in the curriculum. Another example is an issue relating to the late submission of assessments raised by students led to considerations of ways of communicating better with students. IFSA UK teaching staff also receive direct feedback from student evaluations on the quality of teaching and, where necessary, engage in discussions with the Academic Programmes Manager regarding course delivery and potential improvements of teaching practice. IFSA Inc. maintains a system for tracking actions arising from evaluation and monitoring. IFSA UK staff indicated that actions arising from reports are recorded and monitored centrally until resolution, enabling both IFSA Inc. and IFSA UK to assess the effectiveness of interventions and improvements.

23 Apart from the online feedback forms the student voice is also captured the deliberations of the England and Wales Forum for Students, whose meetings are held every fortnight, with 'academics' as one of the three main topics under discussion, as evidenced in the terms of reference. Minutes of the Forum indicate that a range of relevant issues are considered.

24 Quality assurance and programme monitoring at IFSA Inc. is supported by periodic syllabus review processes that align with its pedagogical principles and Butler University requirements. Periodic reviews (three yearly) of module syllabi are conducted externally by Butler University for all modules of IFSA-designed programmes, including those delivered in the UK. The Butler University Faculty Committee has responsibility for the re-approval of programmes after the syllabus review. For IFSA UK programmes (together with all other programmes delivered in Europe) the latest approval took place in the academic year 2024-25. Aspects of the IFSA UK student experience on IFSA-designed programmes such as teaching, learning and assessment are also periodically reviewed by the British Accreditation Council (BAC). Recent inspection reports show that IFSA UK meets its external obligations.

25 Overall, the review team concludes that IFSA UK effectively implements organisational monitoring and evaluation processes for the maintenance of academic standards and the enhancement of the student experience. Monitoring activities contribute to the identification and implementation of improvements to IFSA UK provision. Students, staff and external expertise are appropriately involved in monitoring and evaluation activity. IFSA UK, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 7: Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes

Providers design, develop, approve and modify programmes and modules to ensure the quality of provision and the academic standards of awards are consistent with the relevant Qualifications Framework. Providers ensure their provision and level of qualifications are comparable to those offered across the UK and, where applicable, The Framework of Qualifications for The European Higher Education Area.

Findings

26 The policies and processes for the design, development, approval and modification of IFSA-designed programmes and modules are those of IFSA Inc. The programme development and approval process is set out in its Development, Redevelopment and Programme Planning Standard Operating Procedure and consists of a multi-stage approval process (business case and academic approval). Programme development may include input from external development partners (see paragraph 2). Module content is developed by hired syllabus writers.

27 IFSA UK is involved in the development of new provision delivered in the UK with the Director for England and Wales Programmes and the IFSA UK Academic Programmes Manager directly contributing to programme proposals and establishing the foundational framework for programme design including credit loads, academic roadmaps, curriculum design, and co-curricular features. At the final development stage, the Academic Programmes Manager often works in tandem with the hired syllabus writers to propose revisions that adapt the syllabi to tap into local resources and UK specific context, integrate UK case-based learning and industry visits, and align academic content with local co-curricular opportunities. In some instances, the Academic Programmes Manager also writes syllabi directly or collaborates with teaching staff during the development phase. IFSA UK staff gave an example of how current teaching staff were involved in the ongoing development of a new Microbiology module involving laboratory work which represented an enhancement on the existing offering and addressed an identified critical gap.

28 All IFSA-designed programmes have definitive module documents. They include learning outcomes, syllabi, assessments and grading scales, learning resources and attendance requirements and are centrally held in digital format by the IFSA Inc. Academic Affairs Team. The Academic Manual provides a template to be used in module development to ensure conformity with the IFSA Inc. pedagogical framework. It also explains the nature of credits and contact hours. The review team considered a range of module descriptors and found that these follow the standard format and meet the contact hour and workload requirements for US credits (50-60 contact hours and 135 hours total workload for 3 US credits). In determining the correct academic level of a module of study, Bloom's Taxonomy is utilised to decide whether it is deemed lower-, mid-, or upper level, an approach that is roughly consistent with UK practice. The modules also align with the Qualifications Framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in terms of learning outcomes, credits, recognition and quality assurance principles and credits align with European Credit Transfer and Accumulation (ECTS) guidelines. This is because a broader societal purpose is embedded in the learning outcomes as codified in the Roadmap for Learning. While the UK Qualifications Framework relies on a different approach to establishing how much study is expected in each module of study, the review team were satisfied that the IFSA Inc. approach is equally sound and consistent with the US accreditation expectations and

practice.

29 IFSA Inc. Strategic Advisory Council minutes, while brief, reveal that at organisational level, external input is brought to bear on key elements of the IFSA-designed provision. For example, the November 2025 meeting considered curricular elements as part of the meeting's business. Formal approval of IFSA-designed programmes is through the academic governance structure of Butler University with the Curriculum Committee having oversight of approvals. An example provided showed that the process is working as intended.

30 Module and programme modification processes are set out in the Academic Manual. Minor modifications within clearly specified parameters can be made by teaching staff. Major modifications require IFSA Inc. Academic Affairs approval, and such modifications are to be communicated by IFSA UK staff to designated staff in the IFSA Inc. Academic Affairs Team.

31 IFSA Inc. has a strong commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). Its approach is manifest in the development of IFSA-designed programmes. IFSA Inc. has recently been expanding its educational approach, module content, and assessment methods to ensure students get a deeper understanding of inclusion. For example, some modules include elements to raise awareness of identity, power, and privilege and give students tools to collaborate with people from other cultures, exemplified by the module content of the IFSA Study in London Black History and Influence programme. Similarly, belonging as a measure of success for inclusive programmes is fostered through the community-based learning activities and excursions in all IFSA UK programmes.

32 For partnership programmes, modules are designed, modified and approved by the UK host institution using its own policies and procedures.

33 No awards are received by students on completion of IFSA-designed or partnership programmes, but credits gained count towards the awards students are enrolled on at their home institutions. The award of credit is governed by an agreement between IFSA Inc. and Butler University as the credit awarding body and transcripts/grade reports are centrally produced by the IFSA Inc. Academic Affairs department. The review team confirmed that the credit to be received, and the outcomes of study are made clear to those involved in the teaching, learning and evaluation of modules as set out in the Academic Manual. For students, the issuance of academic transcripts is explained in the Participant Handbook. In addition, the IFSA UK website makes it clear that an official transcript converted to the US academic system will be provided to all students, showing the grades students earned abroad, converted to American college credits. IFSA Inc. sends this transcript directly to students' home institutions, and they determine how credits transfer toward major, minor, and general education requirements. During orientation, students are advised how transcripts relating to their study in the UK will be made available, and unofficial transcripts are also available on the student portal.

34 Overall, the review team concluded that IFSA UK effectively contributes to the implementation of the IFSA Inc. policies and procedures for the design and modification of programmes and modules. It is actively engaged in programme development, and programmes and modules delivered in the UK meet academic standards that are consistent with relevant US and European qualifications and credit frameworks. The programme and module design and development processes align with IFSA Inc. practices on equality, diversity and inclusion and this is evident in modules delivered in the UK. All IFSA-designed programmes have a definitive set of documents which are held securely and act as the primary source of information about each programme and module for IFSA UK staff. How outcomes of study are recorded and certificated, are made clear to all UK students and IFSA UK staff involved in the teaching, learning and evaluation of the programme or module. IFSA

UK, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 9: Recruiting, selecting and admitting students

Providers operate recruitment, selection and admissions processes that are transparent, fair and inclusive. Providers maintain and publish accurate, relevant and accessible information about their provision, enabling students to make informed choices about their studies and future aspirations.

Findings

35 The policies and procedures for recruitment, selection and admission are those of IFSA Inc. and are designed to be transparent, fair, and inclusive. They are underpinned by clear policies and comprehensive guidance for prospective students and their advisors. IFSA UK staff are not actively involved in the selection process. Where applicants meet all the criteria for a programme and complete all application items to standard, the US-based IFSA Inc. Student Enrolment Team decides on admissions to IFSA-designed programmes delivered in the UK. In the case of partnership programmes, the UK partner universities have final authority on student admissions. IFSA Inc. staff involved in recruitment and admissions are appropriately trained for their role.

36 Procedures for application are easily accessible to prospective applicants in the Participant Handbook, via the IFSA Inc. student portal and on the IFSA UK website. They also outline the application process and any support available for this. Procedures are transparent because it is clear what applicants must do, what they need to provide and who they can turn to for support. Prospective applicants will be put in touch by the IFSA Inc. Student Engagement Representative with an Enrolment Counsellor who will advise students throughout the application and admissions process. Recruitment, selection and admission procedures are fair and inclusive because all applications are assessed against published eligibility criteria and programme requirements including minimum academic standing. There is special provision for participants under 18.

37 A student application process map supports those advising applicants. It outlines the actions to be taken by enrolment staff and shows a structured applicant journey, including welcome calls, document reviews, visa tracking, and pre-arrival webinars, enabling a consistent applicant experience and provision of timely updates and reinforce transparency throughout the process. Prospective students are required to sign a Participant Agreement which clearly states the respective responsibilities of the student, and of IFSA Inc., and outlines expectations for behaviour and engagement during the stay in the host country.

38 Successful applicants receive extensive pre-arrival communications and are provided with a wide range of useful generic and UK-specific information and resources. The review team found that the IFSA UK website together with the Participant Handbook and the Participant Agreement provides comprehensive information about the programmes and their requirements for applicants to make informed decisions. IFSA Inc. publishes relevant information across multiple channels. Programme-specific details, visa guidance, and health and safety requirements are communicated through the Participant Handbook. This is supplemented by a range of pre-arrival information on travel, insurance, UK visa requirements, and housing. IFSA Inc. ensures that any changes to programmes or modules that could impact decision-making are communicated promptly and consistently with the Student Enrolment Team responsible for informing applicants on programmes and modules that underenrolled and do not run.

39 Overall, the review team concluded that IFSA Inc. operates recruitment, selection and admissions processes that are transparent, fair and inclusive. Staff involved in the delivery of these processes are appropriately trained. IFSA UK contributes clear, relevant and accessible information about the UK provision, studying and living in the UK, thus enabling applicants to make informed choices about their study. Any programme or module changes that can impact decision-making are communicated promptly. IFSA UK, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 10: Supporting students to achieve their potential

Providers facilitate a framework of support for students that enables them to have a high-quality learning experience and achieve their potential as they progress in their studies. The support structure scaffolds the academic, personal and professional learning journey, enabling students to recognise and articulate their progress and achievements.

Findings

40 Student support strategies, policies and procedures are those of IFSA Inc. with IFSA UK implementing them in the UK context. The support structure is strategic and inclusive. The approach combines clear information, structured transition support, ongoing academic and pastoral support by qualified staff and extra-curricular programming which result in proactive and personalised interventions at every stage of the student journey.

41 Relevant and accurate information about IFSA UK, available programmes, wider development opportunities and support is easily accessible to students on the IFSA UK website. This is supported by a comprehensive Participant Handbook accessible via the IFSA Inc. student portal, timely and detailed application and pre-arrival information and a comprehensive post-arrival induction programme. IFSA UK staff supporting students have access to the same information. In addition, the student application process map illustrates the communication flow with students and the various points at which they are provided with information. The Academic Manual and the Site Staff Operations Manual direct them to further information on supporting students.

42 The Roadmap for Learning supports the orientation, immersion, and re-entry phases with appreciative advising conversations and reflective activities embedded throughout. Students set their study abroad goals prior to arrival and revisit them during orientation workshops, individual appreciative advising sessions, and community-based learning activities. The Appreciative Advising Framework forms the foundation of student interactions with IFSA UK staff. Advising sessions, although optional, are highly encouraged and offer individual coaching and well-being support, with prompts recorded digitally. Students have at least three opportunities per term to book an appointment, and those who made use of the opportunities found them useful. Where topics of interest are flagged, information from advising sessions is shared with the home institution.

43 A high-quality learning experience is also supported by varied and wide-ranging extra-curricular activities, excursions and specific workshops. They include city walks, cooking classes, theatre performances, professional networking events, museum visits, volunteering day, identity affinity groups, film or music nights, overnight excursions and are listed on the IFSA UK website. IFSA UK staff create a calendar of events, send out sign-up invitations and reminders in weekly programme newsletters. The above demonstrated to the review team that IFSA UK students are well supported through accessible, relevant and timely information throughout their learning journey. Extra-curricular community-based learning

activities and excursions have learning goals and objectives and a pre-departure brief and debrief. Excursions are linked to the modules of the programme, providing knowledge of the host culture through community interactions. End of programme evaluations measure the impact of excursions and activities on academic and cultural learning. Students greatly value these learning opportunities.

44 Most academic and pastoral support for students on partnership programmes is provided by the host institution. For students on IFSA-designed programmes, in addition to academic staff office hours, the Academic Programmes Manager is available for study skills support such as time management, essay writing, digital literacy, and CV development. Health, safety and wellbeing forms part of the student induction programme and Student Experience Coordinators are available for pastoral support. All students also have access to the IFSA UK emergency support line and mental health support (counselling). Students are aware of the support available to them and are broadly satisfied with the academic and pastoral support from IFSA UK.

45 IFSA UK staff are appropriately qualified to deliver high-quality pastoral support for their students as evidenced by staff CVs. Staff supporting students receive relevant training through onboarding, updates by the Academic Affairs department, and mandatory training on topics such as health, safety and wellbeing, culture, diversity and inclusion and on the Roadmap for Learning.

46 In line with IFSA Inc. policy on equality and inclusion, IFSA UK supports students with disabilities or special needs through adjustments to the curriculum, learning materials and assessment, the learning environment and living space as much as possible but would not admit students with disabilities it is unable to cater to. This is clearly set out in the Participant Handbook and the Participant Agreement. Accessibility to facilities complies with UK norms. Students with mobility issues can reach first floor of the London teaching premises by stair lift and special academic and housing requirements can be accommodated. Individual support plans are developed by support staff in consultation with students and their home institutions. The review team saw academic adjustments being captured in Student Accommodation Plans and the evidence demonstrates that student needs identified prior to arrival or during the programme are appropriately addressed through individual meetings and other ongoing support arrangements. Students who needed to request such adjustments reported satisfaction with the arrangements put in place.

47 Academic Success Plans and structured evaluation cycles ensure responsive interventions at critical junctures. The plans are used by IFSA UK on IFSA-designed programmes and partnership programmes with students facing academic challenges mid-term. The review team examined examples and found that the plans detail support agreed and any deadlines for completion of any actions.

48 Evaluation instruments seek student views on a range of aspects of the learning journey such as orientation, staff responsiveness, wellbeing, and cultural engagement, and there is evidence that they drive enhancements. A 'You asked – We Answer' document gives an overview of key themes from formal and anonymous student feedback and how it will be addressed, closing the feedback loop.

49 The student voice is also heard through the England and Wales Forum for Students where students frequently meet with the Director England and Wales. While the forum is open to students from all programme types, student members are not elected class representatives, but volunteers and their views may not be representative of the wider student body. IFSA UK is under no obligation to act on any requests submitted by the Forum, however, it must provide a response to students before the end of the term. IFSA UK staff stated that they use feedback from the Forum to inform their 'What Went Well/Even

Better If' responses in the tactical reports. The review team formed the view that the effectiveness of the forum could be enhanced by encouraging more representative student views and, therefore, **recommends** further strengthening the IFSA Forum for Students to ensure that all voices are heard.

50 Overall, the review team concluded that accessible, relevant, accurate and timely information is offered to students and staff supporting them throughout the learning journey, about IFSA UK, the programmes of study, wider opportunities for development and availability of support services. Activities offered outside the formal curriculum are beneficial for promoting students' sense of belonging, as well as providing opportunities to broaden their skills and achievements. The support structure enables students to develop academically, personally and professionally during their study abroad experience. All students are supported at key transition points, with their specific needs and requirements appropriately met. Students and staff are aware of the academic and pastoral services and activities available, and students are encouraged to access these opportunities. IFSA UK staff are appropriately qualified, trained and supported to deliver high-quality learning support for their students. IFSA UK, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 11: Teaching, learning and assessment

Providers facilitate a collaborative and inclusive approach that enables students to have a high-quality learning experience and to progress through their studies. All students are supported to develop and demonstrate academic and professional skills and competencies. Assessment employs a variety of methods, embodying the values of academic integrity, producing outcomes that are comparable across the UK and recognised globally.

Findings

51 Students on partnership programmes are taught and assessed by host institution staff whereas those enrolled on IFSA-designed programmes are taught by IFSA UK part-time academic staff who are also responsible for designing the assessment tasks. For IFSA-designed programmes, module learning activities and assessment are expected to be aligned to the learning outcomes. The definitive module documentation for IFSA UK provision, which students can access through the IFSA UK website, shows that this is the case. It is evident that syllabi are appropriately detailed, with clear information presented on the focus of modules and contents, along with the intended learning outcomes. Modules are designed with a significant amount of autonomous learning (3 hours of autonomous learning per 1 hour contact). The adoption of active learning strategies (in-class discussions, opportunities for questioning) and the Appreciative Advising Framework (e.g. setting and regular revision of study goals and reflection on achievements) enable students to shape their learning.

52 The Academic Manual establishes parameters for assessment on IFSA-designed provision. This includes the need for at least five different assessment methods per module to test the learning outcomes including diagnostic, formative and summative assessment components. The manual also includes guidelines relating to length of assignments. The module descriptors and assessment information on the IFSA UK virtual learning environment (VLE) show that a range of different assessment methods are utilised, including class participation. In the review team's view this variety of methods and assessment tools promotes inclusivity because students have multiple and different opportunities to demonstrate progress towards achievement of the learning outcomes.

53 Example assessment briefs examined by the review team confirm reliability and authenticity of assessment and evidence of alignment to the module learning outcomes. Assessments are fair and reliable because all students are assessed against the same published assessment grading scales that aligns with the IFSA Inc. universal grading criteria published in the Academic Manual. Students generally enjoyed the assessment tasks but would welcome greater support in developing assessment literacy, i.e. understanding what they need to do to get better grades. The Academic Manual encourages the use of grading rubrics and sets out the IFSA Inc. universal grading criteria but does not mandate them. The review team formed the view that there is scope for providing more detail on how assessments would be graded, consistent with practice elsewhere in the UK higher education sector. The team, therefore, **recommends** that, in respect of IFSA UK-designed provision, IFSA UK considers developing a standardised approach to the presentation of all assessment and marking information.

54 IFSA Inc. sets out the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) by students in its Academic Integrity and Responsible AI Use Policy. The Participant Handbook also informs students on the permitted use of AI. Students are provided with further guidance upon enrolment in a module on the VLE and are made aware of the use of AI during orientation. Moreover, each assignment brief provides specific guidance on how AI can or cannot be used to complete the task. Meetings with staff and students confirmed that the policy is well-known and understood and teaching staff provided examples of authentic assessments (such as live debates) that help to mitigate against the inappropriate use of AI.

55 To support student learning there is an expectation that teaching staff provide frequent, detailed and constructive feedback to students. Staff induction materials provide details on what feedback should include. To ensure that feedback is timely and helpful both the IFSA UK Academic Programmes Manager and the Academic Coordinator review feedback quality prior to students receiving their marks. Students on IFSA-designed programmes were generally satisfied with the feedback that was provided on assessed work, including what was needed to improve their work further. The review team, therefore, formed the view that students are provided with helpful and timely feedback.

56 IFSA Inc. provides students and staff with advice and guidance about academic integrity. For staff there is comprehensive information about expectations of students regarding academic integrity and dealing with academic dishonesty which are set out in an Academic Integrity Policy in the Academic Manual. This is cross-referenced in the Site Staff Operations Manual and the IFSA London Instructor Handbook and covered as part of the staff onboarding process.

57 For students, the Participant Handbook provides information on what constitutes academic misconduct and how to avoid academic dishonesty and explains how it will be dealt with when discovered. Expectations are reinforced during orientation, and all module descriptors contain an academic integrity statement. Staff and students are fully aware of the policy and processes. This indicates that IFSA UK ensures stakeholders are carefully apprised of academic integrity considerations. The policy was invoked recently although academic misconduct is a rare occurrence. While IFSA UK has not uncovered a level 3 incident as defined in the Academic Manual, it has uncovered a level 2 incident in recent terms, which was managed as per policy.

58 IFSA Inc. supports the use of learning technology to augment and enhance the student learning experience, and expectations for its use are clearly communicated to staff in the Academic Manual. It is mandatory for teaching staff to use the VLE to share information about the modules, assessments and grades, communicate with students, and record attendance. Students are also required to submit their assessments via the VLE. The review team had access to the IFSA UK VLE and found that it contained comprehensive information

as intended. Students confirmed that all relevant information and materials can be found on the VLE.

59 Expectations in respect of teaching staff (which includes teaching assistants) qualifications point to a wish to engage those with research and teaching experience, qualified at least to master's level although those with a bachelor's degree and substantial experience and specialised knowledge can also serve. Examination of teaching staff CVs revealed they are suitably qualified and are drawn from a range of relevant disciplines, consistent with the requirements of the academic provision that is offered at the London centre. Teaching staff confirmed that they were selected based on their disciplinary expertise and experience teaching in international or study abroad contexts. Students indicated that teaching staff demonstrate good subject knowledge and provide relevant perspectives related to the UK context.

60 IFSA UK teaching staff are supported in enhancing their teaching practice through a course observation scheme by management once every three assignments. Observation reports examined by the review team were comprehensive and developmental. Optional peer observations in some subject areas are also available. Teaching observation is required of all new academic staff before the mid-point of a module, suggesting that IFSA UK looks to address any issues early on in a teaching staff member's appointment.

61 The quality of teaching of all staff is monitored by IFSA UK through formal teaching evaluation reports which include an optional and anonymous mid-point student survey, course observation reports, and the post-programme student survey results. Mandatory teaching observation is triggered by negative feedback from student evaluations and tailored training sessions are available. There is evidence that these sessions have had a positive impact on teaching practice. For those requiring more systematic pedagogic development individual Learning Development Plans are created. Thus far IFSA UK has not had the need for a member of teaching staff to undertake a Learning Development Plan.

62 Other pedagogic staff development is more informal, and teaching staff highlighted the valuable support and guidance provided by senior staff relating to pedagogy. One staff member has also been supported to apply for Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, and a workshop has been held on the topic of artificial intelligence and digital literacy. While these development opportunities are welcome, continuous professional development (CPD) is generally not accessible by teaching staff. Instead IFSA UK relies on its part-time academic staff having access to and taking up CPD opportunities at other higher education institutions they may be working for to keep their practice current. Given the nature of the academic staffing base and the relatively small-scale nature of the IFSA UK provision, this approach is generally effective. However, the review team formed the view that there is scope for improvement and **recommends** that IFSA UK consider offering further pedagogic professional development opportunities for teaching staff.

63 IFSA UK does not deliver research degrees. However, as part of IFSA-designed programmes students can undertake directed research at undergraduate level, i.e. individualised field research with faculty experts on a contemporary issue of interest. Staff who are engaged in this are adequately supported through training at onboarding, regular meetings with the Academic Programmes Manager, a course observation visit and a mid-point survey where they are expected to formally reflect on their practice.

64 Overall, the review team concluded that assessment for IFSA UK delivered modules allows students to demonstrate that they meet the learning outcomes and that the design of learning activities enables students are to take responsibility for their own learning. Students are given clear information about the intended learning outcomes and assessment although there is scope for a standardised approach to the presentation of all assessment and

marking information. IFSA UK teaching staff design assessments that are fair, reliable and authentic and students are enabled to use feedback/feedforward to support further learning. The IFSA Inc. approaches to the use of technologies that impact teaching, learning and assessment such as AI are clearly communicated to staff and students. Staff involved in facilitating learning and supervising research are appropriately qualified and supported to enhance their teaching and supervisory practice although access to continuous professional development for teaching staff could be improved. IFSA UK, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Principle 12: Operating concerns, complaints and appeals processes

Providers operate processes for complaints and appeals that are robust, fair, transparent and accessible, and clearly articulated to staff and students. Policies and processes for concerns, complaints and appeals are regularly reviewed and the outcomes are used to support the enhancement of provision and the student experience.

Findings

65 The policies and procedures for student complaints and academic appeals are those of IFSA Inc. with IFSA UK utilising the General Feedback and Formal Complaints Procedure for IFSA-designed programmes. Students on partnership programmes access the complaints and appeals policies of their host institutions. Review of processes as well as monitoring of outcomes from complaints and appeals for all provision occurs at the level of the parent organisation with procedures reviewed annually. For appeals and complaints where IFSA Inc. is directly accountable, it oversees the outcome until completion. Outcomes are monitored and reported centrally. IFSA UK does not monitor the outcomes relating to the UK provision separately.

66 The complaints procedure clearly outlines accessible routes for students to raise concerns and complaints, including informal and formal pathways and is robust, transparent and inclusive. The procedure prioritises early resolution through informal discussion before escalation and aims for proportionality through mediation options, thus helping to reduce stress for students and promoting timely outcomes. Staff members receiving a complaint are expected to keep records and inform the student on resolution by email. The review team examined examples of complaints handling and resolution through a demonstration of the online complaints tracking system and found that the complaints procedure is implemented as intended. There was evidence of formal complaints being appropriately logged centrally by location and case notes, recommendations and next steps being kept on the system for sharing with relevant staff. Students were getting responses to their complaints within the specified timeframe.

67 The Participant Handbook states that students on IFSA- designed programmes use the IFSA Inc. academic grade appeals process whereas students on partnership programmes may also access policies of their host institution. The review team found that there are clear deadlines for the submission of appeals as well as the process for consideration and resolution of appeals and communication of outcomes. All appeals are considered by an Appeals Committees. If the appeal involves the host institution, IFSA UK staff support the students through the process. Reviewing appeals documentation and following a demonstration of the online appeals handling system, the review team confirmed that processes are adhered to and cases are resolved within the specified timeframes. There

was evidence of case notes created on the central system showing the basis of the claim, who considered it, and a point-by-point response to the student appealing.

68 Data from the complaints and appeals processes feed into the IFSA Inc. quality cycle such as quarterly tactical reports and annual strategic reports. The reports include recommendations for service improvement, and completion of actions would be tracked centrally. In the reports examined by the review team there was no overview of student complaints and academic appeals, due to the low numbers in both circumstances. There is evidence, however, that academic appeals findings informed enhancement activities where systemic issues had been identified. For example, in 2022 IFSA Inc. received three grade appeals. In response it undertook a comprehensive review of all academic policies and processes, standards and resources, culminating in the creation of a comprehensive resource to support student learning in the form of the Academic Manual. This led to the creation of minimum standards for the VLE, faculty onboarding and oversight, quality assurance, appeals management, staff training, and the eventual creation of the Student Forum.

69 IFSA UK meets the requirements of the British Accreditation Authority (BAC) in relation to complaints and appeals as it makes its procedures available to students on BAC accredited programmes, i.e. IFSA-designed programmes. In addition, students on these programmes can escalate complaints once they have exhausted the IFSA Inc. processes.

70 Overall, the review team concluded that the IFSA Inc. policies and processes for concerns, complaints and appeals are accessible, robust and inclusive, and enable early resolution. Formal and informal stages of the processes are clearly articulated to staff and students. Procedures are appropriately implemented by IFSA UK within the limited remit it has. They are regularly reviewed and the outcomes are used by IFSA Inc. to support the enhancement of provision and of the student experience. IFSA UK, therefore, **is aligned** with the Sector-Agreed Principle.

Enhancement initiatives

Commentary on institutional approach to enhancement

71 The overall strategy, practice and processes for the systematic enhancement of the student learning experience originates from IFSA Inc. IFSA UK does not have a separate institutional approach or policies and processes for enhancement.

72 Enhancement of the academic provision and the student learning experience is integral to the operation of IFSA Inc. which employs an evidence-based approach to the evaluation and enhancement of quality through monitoring and review activities that are informed primarily by evaluation data. Data collection and reporting processes are set out within organisational policies and procedures which ensure that datasets are collected consistently, analysed centrally, and used locally to enhance the student experience. Enhancement is facilitated through structured student evaluations at key points of the study abroad learning journey. This includes evaluation surveys and location-based student forums.

73 Data from UK students feeds through these mechanisms into regional tactical and organisational strategic reports which identify improvement actions. Data analysis is primarily conducted at IFSA Inc., with IFSA UK focusing on interpretation and local application of findings rather than undertaking independent analysis. IFSA UK staff engage with evaluation findings relevant to UK provision and contribute to discussions regarding programme performance and potential improvements. Both quantitative indicators and

qualitative feedback are considered when identifying areas for enhancement. The approach enables timely identification of issues and quick adjustments to programme content and delivery by IFSA UK, such as adjustments to the course structure and teaching activities. Completion of actions and their impact is monitored centrally.

74 Student complaints and appeals are also used to drive enhancement of the student experience globally and have led to the creation of the Academic Manual, a comprehensive resource to support student learning, and the establishment of minimum standards for the VLE, academic staff onboarding, quality assurance, appeals management, staff training, and the creation of the student forum.

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