



## **EUSA LLP**

Recognition Scheme for Educational  
Oversight Review by the Quality Assurance  
Agency for Higher Education

March 2020

## About this report

This is a report of a review under the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at EUSA LLP. The review took place on 5 March 2020 and was conducted by a review team, as follows:

- Professor Christopher Maguire
- Brenda Eade.

The main purpose of the review was to:

- produce a commentary on how effectively the provider discharges its responsibilities for academic standards
- make judgements about the provider's delegated responsibilities for the management of quality and improvement of learning opportunities
- report on any features of good practice
- make recommendations for action.

A summary of the key findings can be found in the section starting on page 2. The context in which these findings should be interpreted is explained on page 3. Explanations of the findings are given in numbered paragraphs in the section starting on page 4.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.<sup>1</sup> More information about this, the review method, can be found in the [published handbook](#).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us)

<sup>2</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/recognition-scheme-for-educational-oversight-\(rseo\)-handbook.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/recognition-scheme-for-educational-oversight-(rseo)-handbook.pdf)

## Key findings

The QAA team considered evidence relating to the educational provision at EUSA LLP, both information supplied in advance and evidence gathered during the visits of the review itself. The review has resulted in the key findings stated in this section.

## Judgements

The QAA team formed the following judgement about EUSA LLP.

- **Confidence can be placed in** EUSA's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities

The QAA review team also concluded that EUSA **satisfactorily** manages its responsibilities for academic standards, as set out in its contractual arrangements with its academic partners.

## Good practice

The QAA team identified the following **feature of good practice** at EUSA.

- The development and embedding of 'Growth Tracker' from the Personal Learning Objective Toolkit (PILOT) initiative to systematically identify and monitor achievement of professional competences.

## Recommendations

The QAA team makes the following advisable recommendation to EUSA.

- Ensure documented oversight of actions taken and systematic evaluation at institutional level by all stakeholders.

## Context

EUSA LLP designs the courses in conjunction with its partners. The overseas university is responsible for awarding credit. EUSA does not award credit or have a registrar function in the UK. A formal agreement is drawn up with each university.

The overseas institutions are all universities linked to one of seven regional awarding bodies in America. The awarding bodies are recognised by NARIC.

EUSA implements common standards across all programmes to ensure quality and compliance with local laws. The partner universities act as reference point. The volume and level of credit awarded for EUSA programmes is determined by the partner universities. The credit awarded contributes to the overall credit for the degree.

QAA undertook a review for the Recognition Scheme for Education Oversight in 2012 and 2016 followed by monitoring visits in 2017 and 2019 with positive outcomes. Partner universities visit EUSA for monitoring purposes.

## Detailed findings about EUSA

### 1 Academic standards

#### **How effectively does EUSA fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?**

1 EUSA effectively fulfils its responsibilities for the management of academic standards through its close relationships with its 39 partner universities and its clearly defined management and committee structures which provide systematic oversight of standards at the strategic and operational level.

2 Signed formal agreements are in place between EUSA and all its university partners. These clearly set out the responsibilities of each party. EUSA designs and delivers courses in conjunction with the university partners who determine the level and volume of credit to be awarded to the student upon successful completion of the programme. EUSA does not award credit and consequently does not have a registrar function in the UK. The university partners monitor standards through close liaison with the EUSA University Relations team in Boston, the Academic Director, the local EUSA team and regular visits to the EUSA campuses to meet with staff and students. A template partner visit form is used by EUSA to capture the findings of the partner university.

3 EUSA's Management Team comprises the Executive Director (Chair), Academic Director, Finance Director, Information Director, Operations Director, and University Relations Director. The Management Team has overall responsibility for quality of programming, long-term organisational planning, and leadership of EUSA. It meets three times a year and reports to the Board of Representatives which consists of four nominees from Boston University. The Academic Director has oversight of the management of academic standards for all campuses including London. The London Director and Assistant Director monitor the maintenance of standards at the operational level for the London campus.

4 The Academic Policy Manual sets out the terms of reference of the provider's deliberative committee. The Academic Committee meets twice a year and is responsible for monitoring standards through the consideration of assessment grades, and feedback from stakeholders. Membership of the Committee includes a permanent member of the teaching faculty, a rotating member of the teaching faculty and a visiting EUSA director from outside the UK.

5 EUSA has a rigorous process for the development and implementation of new courses which is set out in the Academic Policy Manual. New courses and syllabus development is approved by the Academic Committee. The Committee also undertakes formal review of programme delivery twice a year.

6 EUSA designs programmes at the request of its partner universities. It delivers the academic elements of the course and manages the placements. It is responsible for setting, marking and moderating assessments.

#### **How effectively are external reference points used in the management of academic standards?**

7 As indicated in paragraph 2, EUSA makes effective use of its university partners and the academic framework under which they operate, as the main external reference point for the management of academic standards.

8 EUSA has an Advisory Committee which brings together its partner institutions and provides a platform for sharing best practice in academic internship programming. The Committee acts as an external reference point for new developments.

9 Since 2012, EUSA has used QAA as an external reference point through the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight and has received successful outcomes from the reviews in 2012 and 2016 and the subsequent monitoring visits in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

**How effectively does EUSA use external scrutiny of assessment processes to assure academic standards (where applicable)?**

10 EUSA faculty are responsible for writing the assessment briefs for modules in accordance with the assessment metric set out in the course syllabus. Partner universities approve the method of assessment as part of the course design process, acting as an external reference point for academic standards.

11 First-marking and moderation is the responsibility of EUSA. Following the publication of reports by the OfS and the Department of Education on grade inflation in 2018 and 2019, EUSA now considers student achievement across all modules through the Academic Committee. It also analyses performance on modules between years. Students are able to 'contest' grades and assessments are then second-marked to identify any anomalies.

12 Samples of assessment provided for the review team indicated that academic standards are assured through the assessment process.

The panel has concluded that EUSA satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners.

## **2 Quality of learning opportunities**

**How effectively does EUSA fulfil its responsibilities for managing and improving the quality of learning opportunities?**

13 EUSA fulfils its responsibilities for managing and improving the quality of learning opportunities through its clearly-defined governance structures, including executive responsibilities through the Management Committee, oversight through the Academic Committee and compliance with the written academic regulations, policies and procedures, all of which are set out in the Academic Policy Manual.

14 The strategic and operational oversight of the quality of the student experience remains unchanged since the previous review. The Academic Committee reviews course delivery at its biannual meetings utilising a number of feedback mechanisms from students, staff and partners. Any issues which arise are reported to the Management Committee by the Operations Director (for delivery matters) or Academic Director (for quality issues relating to academic content). Local, day-to-day responsibility lies with the City Director for the London programme, with oversight from the Operations Director on operational matters and the Academic Director on academic matters. EUSA's University Relations Team has primary responsibility for liaising between the City Director and the partner university.

15 EUSA designs and delivers its programmes under the aegis of its 39 partner institutions (12 of whom have programme delivery in London by EUSA), each of which is approved by one of the seven US regional accrediting agencies recognised by NARIC. Each

partnership with EUSA is formalised through letters of agreement. EUSA is subject to such levels of oversight and scrutiny as each of its partners determine, but in each case, it actively seeks to facilitate engagement through transparency in the programme design process and through inspections, site visits and meetings where these are requested. EUSA's partners do not provide formal written feedback but EUSA seeks to capture oral and informal feedback through its internal report forms. The programme design process determines the blueprint for the quality of the students' learning experience. In doing so, it seeks to tailor the intended learning outcomes of the academic programme and internship within the context of the study abroad experience.

16 The mature governance, reporting and review structures enables EUSA to effectively fulfil its responsibilities for the management and improvement of learning opportunities.

### **How effectively are external reference points used in monitoring and evaluation processes?**

17 The requirements of the partner universities provide the primary external reference point for EUSA in terms of the quality of learning experience. In the absence of formal feedback, the longevity of these relationships attests to EUSA's success in meeting the expectations of its partners.

18 EUSA also uses its Advisory Committee to provide a forum through which it can seek feedback on proposed initiatives and strategic advice on matters affecting its provision.

19 EUSA has cognisance of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and continues to monitor it for alignment where relevant, and particularly in relation to assessment practices, course development and work-based learning. In addition, EUSA is alive to policy reports from the Office for Students and the Department of Education.

### **How effectively does EUSA assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?**

20 EUSA's governance structures and the range of monitoring and review mechanisms that it employs, as set out in the Academic Policy Manual provide assurance that EUSA effectively assures itself that the quality of its teaching and learning, including internships, is maintained and enhanced.

21 Oversight of the quality of teaching and learning is the responsibility of the Academic Committee. The membership of the Academic Committee includes the Executive Director, the Academic Director, one permanent and one rotating member of London teaching faculty, the Operations Directors, the London Director and Assistant Director. The Academic Committee meets bi-annually and reports to EUSA's Management Team.

22 The Academic Committee employs a range of mechanisms to check the quality of teaching and learning, which include: end of term student surveys; student evaluations of internships course; observation of new members of staff; reports from course faculty, and the City Director's evaluation report.

23 A formal internal review is conducted at the end of each programme and is considered by the Academic Committee through a standing item on its agenda. The outcome of this review is captured in the minutes of the meeting, with action points allocated to appropriate EUSA staff and monitored in between meetings of the Academic Committee by the Academic Director or Operations Director. The review team noted that EUSA does

not compile a formal, synoptic, quality oversight report or a recorded and updated action plan. The review team considered such an approach **advisory** and would provide a useful oversight tool that would record issues and developments, systematically track actions and identify trends and patterns.

24 There is evidence of actions and enhancements arising from the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, which include improvements to delivery and enhancement to syllabus development.

25 EUSA continues to implement its longitudinal study, introduced in 2016, of alumni who graduated from the programme five years previously. The survey seeks to elicit information on the impact of the international internship on employability and competency acquisition. The results are shared with the wider study abroad community and used to inform the work of the Academic Committee, for example, in the development of Growth Tracker (see below) which enables students to set and measure their achievement of professional competencies.

26 In 2019, EUSA introduced a further survey: the Student Engagement Survey, which provided EUSA with additional insight into the background, motivation and needs of its students. The EUSA Management Team is determining whether to continue with the survey annually.

### **How effectively does EUSA assure itself that students are appropriately supported?**

27 Students remain well supported through the provision of: pre and on-course information; academic support through faculty; support throughout their placements; and pastoral support in relation to matters such as health, accommodation and emergency support.

28 EUSA's partner universities are ultimately responsible for student marketing, application and selection. However, EUSA works with its partners to provide a range of documents to ensure that students' expectations are realistic, and that they are well prepared for the experience of living and working abroad. Prior to departure, students receive an orientation presentation by EUSA staff. On arrival, EUSA provides multiple contact points with students to discuss academic programme, placement and pastoral concerns and provides round-the-clock support.

29 Significant selection and pre-placement coaching takes place early in the allocation process, including mock interviews and workshops. A Placements Manager oversees the tailoring of placements to each individual student, and supports them during the placement. Placements are reviewed each semester using student feedback obtained from mid-term reviews and final student evaluations. All active internship supervisors must complete the online supervisor agreement which includes a concise summary of their obligations over the course of a placement. Supervisor evaluations are collected at the end of each term, and reported in the end of programme reviews. Company site visits take place in order to increase EUSA's understanding of the company, or to troubleshoot issues or concerns that may have arisen.

30 Students who the review team met confirmed that the information they received prior to departure was clear and representative of the experience they had received. The induction process was thorough and they were complimentary about the level of personal support - both academic and pastoral - that was made available to them while on their programmes and placements.



31 EUSA has used a standalone Personalised Learning Objective Toolkit (PILOT) to assist students in identifying their learning objectives for the programme. Based on an assessment of participation rates and feedback from students, programme managers and partner universities, EUSA has redeveloped PILOT as 'Growth Tracker', which will be launched in summer 2020. It is intended that Growth Tracker will enable students to identify, set targets and track evidence of their achievement of professional competencies that they can then describe to graduate schools and future employers. The team considers the development of PILOT into Growth Tracker to be **good practice**.

**How effective are EUSA's arrangements for staff development in relation to maintaining and/or improving the quality of learning opportunities?**

32 Policies are in place to recruit, induct and oversee new part-time faculty. The City Director is primarily responsible for the onboarding of new faculty, with oversight from the Operations Director and Academic Director. The Academic Director observes and reviews the teaching of newly-appointed faculty.

33 EUSA does not take formal responsibility for the professional development of its part-time teaching staff. However, through its association with Boston University, members of faculty are invited to attend workshops delivered by Boston University's Centre for Teaching and Learning. As a matter of policy, faculty are invited to sit on the Academic Committee on a rotating basis to help inform them of how EUSA manages, scrutinises and seeks to enhance academic standards. Peer review has been introduced on a voluntary basis; however, no observations have yet taken place. Other post-induction staff development is limited to matters relating to the Code of Conduct and management training in mental health awareness, health and safety, and internship interview training.

**How effectively does EUSA ensure that students have access to learning resources that are sufficient to enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes of their programmes?**

34 The learning resources required for delivery are specified at the course design and approval stage and set out in the course syllabus. Typically, these include textbooks, journals, teaching space and field trips. The City Director is responsible for ensuring that the resources are made available at the point of delivery. Teaching space is hired from King's College, London and located at the Waterloo campus. Resources are reviewed by the Academic Committee and augmented as required.

35 The students who the review team met, confirmed that the resources available to them were sufficient. Student course feedback forms consistently rated learning materials as at least 3 out of 5 and predominantly 4 or 5. One student commented that the journals provided had been particularly helpful while another commented on the variability of classroom quality at King's College London, which was also noted by the Academic Committee.

The panel has **confidence** that EUSA is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and improving the quality of the learning opportunities it provides for students.

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