



Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight: report of the desk-based analysis of EUSA LLP, March 2021

Outcome of the desk-based analysis

1 From the annual return and documentary evidence, the monitoring team concludes that the EUSA LLP is continuing to maintain academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities since the [March 2020 RSEO review](#).

Changes since the last QAA review

2 EUSA's Spring 2020 programme commenced as planned, with student numbers aligning with those of 2019. However, owing to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, all internship-based experiential learning on the Spring programmes was halted and students returned home in early March 2020. Three of the four academic courses had already been completed by the middle of March 2020. The fourth programme, a hybrid experiential and academic course, was completed remotely, with revised learning outcomes reflecting the shift to academic research-based assessment. Summer programmes were all cancelled owing to the pandemic and associated travel ban. Autumn 2020 programmes were all cancelled with one exception, New York University, which ran with a small number of students undertaking newly offered virtual internships in London. Planning and development are underway for the delivery of virtual internships more extensively in Spring 2021, although EUSA is not delivering any academic content in 2021. Discussion is underway with university partners for programme delivery in 2021-22, with consideration being given to either in-person, hybrid or virtual models for academic internships. No other substantive changes have taken place during the last academic year.

Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The desk-based analysis was carried out using the Annual Return and other documentation provided by EUSA. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant and adverse impact on EUSA's operations. However, there is clear evidence that EUSA has devised an appropriate action plan to implement improvements against the advisable recommendation and feature of good practice identified in the March 2020 review, and has been taking appropriate steps to address these. Although further steps are needed to fully complete the action plan, satisfactory progress has been made so far, especially considering that owing to the pandemic no further academic teaching is planned until January 2022. When teaching resumes, it will be delivered in line with appropriate procedures to keep staff and students safe, complying with US and UK Government regulations and approved by the Academic Committee.

4 The March 2020 review team identified the development and embedding of the Growth Tracker initiative, which aims to systematically monitor the achievement of professional competencies, as a feature of good practice. However, the roll-out of the Growth Tracker has been severely hampered by the pandemic. Despite this, some progress has been made as it has been trialled with the small number of students on virtual internships in Autumn 2020 and areas for improvement identified. EUSA's intention, as stated in the Action Plan, is to roll out the Growth Tracker further in Spring 2021, through virtual internships and with plans to provide evidence of its impact later in the academic year.

Despite highly challenging circumstances, EUSA has made satisfactory progress on the recommendation to ensure documented oversight of actions taken and systematic evaluation at institutional level by all stakeholders through the implementation of procedures to receive and analyse feedback from students and academic staff. No academic delivery has taken place since the review team's visit in March 2020, and no more face-to-face teaching is planned until January 2022. However, with the approval of participating universities, EUSA has since devised and implemented a programme of virtual internships without any direct teaching provision, which started in February 2021.

5 The action plan devised following the full review in March 2020 has been revised in terms of target dates owing to the dramatic changes in circumstances. The plan clearly states the actions to be taken and the evaluative measures, with a review planned at the end of the Spring 2021 semester. In order to more effectively align institutional processes with QAA oversight, the Academic Committee also decided to produce an institutional-level Annual Enhancement Plan for each academic year. This would then be reviewed at the Autumn meeting. Implementation of this has been severely delayed by the pandemic, but has begun in very limited form.

6 The syllabus for each of the four courses that were running in March 2020 is clear, highly detailed and contains full descriptions of assessments, grading criteria and marking schemes. One course, Business in British Society, which straddled the Spring programme and dovetailed students' internship-based experiential learning with the academic provision, was cut short due to the pandemic and subsequent UK lockdown. At the request of, and subsequent approval by, the partner university, EUSA successfully adapted the course to an academically-based research programme with remote learning components. Students subsequently completed their learning in April 2020 and submitted their feedback forms. Unfortunately, these were irretrievably lost owing to an IT failure, despite extensive efforts to retrieve them. The issue of lack of feedback was subsequently discussed by Academic Committee and appropriate changes devised to institutional management and IT processes to avoid similar recurrences.

7 The planned April 2020 meeting of the Academic Committee was cancelled due to the pandemic. Evaluations of Spring 2020 courses were discussed by the Committee at its following meeting in November. As part of the internal procedures to fully evaluate the impact of its provision, feedback was obtained from students and faculty academic staff for three of the four courses delivered in Spring 2020 and completed just as the lockdown began. These evaluations were subsequently reviewed by the City Director and discussed by the Academic Committee. While evaluation forms reflect the range of student feedback, they contain no overarching comments by the City Director on the course's effectiveness. One faculty feedback form was missing as the tutor had been put on furlough, although appropriate verbal feedback subsequently formed part of the discussion at the Academic Committee.

8 The March 2020 review report refers to the introduction of a voluntary peer review process, although no activity had taken place at that point. No academic courses have taken place since issues relating to the teaching were raised in student feedback forms.

9 The absence of new intakes of students since the March 2020 review means that student data provided by EUSA is necessarily very limited. Courses running at the time of that review were subsequently completed and graded appropriately, with all students achieving successfully at an A grade or above.

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

10 EUSA's main external reference points for academic standards continue to be working closely with fully accredited US universities to meet the quality and inclusivity standards of these degree-awarding institution.

11 EUSA's US Advisory Committee serves as an external reference point for academic standards. Although this body did not meet in 2020 because of the pandemic, meetings are planned for 2021 pending confirmation of availability from partner universities.

12 EUSA utilises QAA's cyclical monitoring and evaluation process, underpinned by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, to shape its own structures and goals.

13 EUSA continues to use relevant guidance from US and UK public health agencies to inform its policies and processes to keep staff and students safe. The Management Plan will continue to be a standing item on the Academic Committee agenda for its forthcoming meetings, to ensure safe working practices, particularly when considering the resumption of face-to-face course delivery.

Background to the desk-based analysis

14 The desk-based analysis serves as a short check on the provider's continuing management of academic standards and quality of provision. It focuses on progress since the previous review/annual monitoring. In addition, it provides an opportunity for QAA to advise the provider of any matters that have the potential to be of particular interest in the next monitoring process or review.

15 The desk-based analysis was carried out by Mike Coulson, Reviewer, and Simon Ives, QAA Officer, in March 2021. No meetings were held with students or staff, and the conclusions presented in this report are based on the analysis of documentary evidence submitted by the provider.

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