



Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of EUSA LLP, March 2022

The impact of COVID-19

1 As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the monitoring visit was conducted online and included meetings with senior, teaching and support staff, and students. The scope of the evidence considered, and the nature of the outcomes and operational milestones have remained the same but with some adjustments due to the online format. A risk assessment was carried out prior to the review to identify and mitigate any potential risks.

Outcome of the monitoring visit

2 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that EUSA LLP (EUSA) is making acceptable progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [March 2021 Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight annual monitoring report](#).

Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

3 There is a 40% increase in students currently enrolled at the provider, from 2021's lower numbers due to COVID-19 restrictions. Student numbers are expected to increase in the summer term of 2022. The provider has one London Director, one Assistant Director, one Programme Manager, six Placement Managers and one Office Manager.

4 EUSA London delivered one academic course in 2021 that reflects the situation due to COVID-19. There have been no other significant changes to the provision since the desk-based monitoring visit of March 2021.

Findings from the monitoring visit

5 EUSA LLP is making acceptable progress in responding to the recommendation and good practice identified in the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight Review of 2020 and implementing its own action plan, but due to the pandemic there has not yet been an opportunity to fully implement some of the actions or carry out an analysis of their effectiveness. The advisable recommendation was that the provider should ensure documented oversight of actions taken and systematic evaluation at institutional level by all stakeholders. The provider has established an Annual Enhancement Plan in response to the advisable recommendation.

6 The area of good practice was the development and embedding of 'Growth Tracker' from the Personal Learning Objective Toolkit (PILOT) initiative to systematically identify and monitor achievement of professional competences. Growth Tracker was due to be rolled out across all EUSA sites in summer 2020. However, this timetable has been impacted by the pandemic and has yet to be completed across all centres. The summer 2021 course delivery in London, which included Growth Tracker, was assessed at the autumn Academic Committee meeting. To further enhance the Growth Tracker scheme, a new end-of-programme workshop entitled 'Unpacking Your Internship Experience' has been developed. Students the review team met at the visit were familiar with Growth Tracker

but had not yet been through the complete process. Students each receive a comprehensive summary report on progress against their original objectives at the end of their programme.

7 In the 2021 monitoring visit, the team identified that the provider had devised an appropriate action plan to implement improvements against the advisable recommendation and feature of good practice identified in the March 2020 review, and had been taking appropriate steps to address these. Although further steps were needed to fully complete the action plan, satisfactory progress had been made at that time.

8 The pandemic has continued to affect the provider's activities. Reduced programme numbers have had the effect of lengthening the time required for meaningful impact assessments of actions being undertaken since the last full review. However, in response to the recommendation, the provider did establish an Annual Enhancement Plan at institutional level which now draws together action points from the Academic Committee and Management Team meetings.

9 Several enhancement priorities have also been identified by the provider in the Annual Enhancement Plan, including Covid Policies, the Virtual Internship Programme and a Partner Feedback Loop. The Management Team meeting in August 2021 considered a Covid-related action plan which included drafts of 'return to work policy' and 'internship policy'. The Annual Enhancement plan was considered at the October 2021 meeting of the Academic Committee.

10 A virtual internship programme was established in spring 2021 in response to in-person internships not being possible. These virtual internships entailed the provider sourcing academic internships for students based abroad, working 100% of the time remotely, with London-based work supervisors who could provide meaningful supervision for project work. In order to combat the isolation of remote learning, the provider established a sense of community among students by means of informal student message boards, interactive workshops and cultural events.

11 A meeting of City Directors evaluated the delivery of the spring 2021 intern programme through student reviews, supervisor feedback and input from staff who were delivering the programme. The comprehensive review identified actions to improve subsequent delivery of the programme including sharing a Growth Tracker skills document with supervisors together with the competencies students have chosen.

12 All student-orientated communication materials have been redesigned with a greater emphasis on graphics. Text-based approaches have been supplemented with video explanations covering the placement process, interview techniques and Growth Tracker.

13 The way in which EUSA captures and shares information with partner universities was modified in 2021 with the objective of strengthening the lines of communication with partner universities, the quality of information being shared, and the responsiveness to any issues raised. From spring 2022, university partners will be sent an End of Programme Partner Report containing quantitative and qualitative feedback from students and City Directors.

14 Grades for the 'Understanding the London Experience' module since the 2018 syllabus changes have been consistently very high. In May 2021, the Academic Committee resolved to make the course more academically challenging by increasing the word length of the 10 writing assignments.

Student data return

15 Due to the nature of the provision, which is made up of short programmes of study, analysis of student data does not allow meaningful conclusions to be drawn. Also, due to the pandemic, the number of students on programmes taught by EUSA LLP has been low.

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

16 EUSA LLP's main external reference point for academic standards continues to be working closely with its fully-accredited US university partners to meet the quality and inclusivity standards of those degree-awarding institutions.

17 The Advisory Committee serves as an external reference point for academic standards. Although this body did not meet in 2020 or 2021 because of the pandemic, meetings are planned for later in 2022. In the past, the Advisory Committee has typically met twice a year at major study abroad conferences.

18 The provider states that it utilises QAA's cyclical monitoring and evaluation process, underpinned by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), to shape its own structures and goals, and that the Quality Code informs all of EUSA's processes. Staff at the virtual visit stated their intention to carry out a benchmarking of its provision against the Quality Code to ensure alignment.

19 The provider's Growth Tracker scheme was developed in alignment with key professional competencies as defined by the National Association of Colleges and Employers. Changes to student communication methods have been influenced by contemporary research to include a more visual approach.

20 Prior to the pandemic, EUSA staff attended international conferences as finances allowed. One staff member sits on the board of the American Study Abroad Providers group which considers matters such as health and safety, and visa issues.

Background to the monitoring visit

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

22 The monitoring visit was carried out by Mr Peter Hymans, Reviewer, and Dr Margaret Johnson, QAA Officer, on 15 March 2022.

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