



## Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight: desk-based analysis of GIHE UK Limited, June 2022

### Outcome of the desk-based analysis

1 From the annual return and documentary evidence, the monitoring team concludes that GIHE UK Limited (GIHE) is continuing to maintain academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities since the March 2021 [annual monitoring visit](#).

### Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

2 Student numbers, as recorded in November 2021, stood at 185 students in total, with 113 undergraduate students studying for the Bachelor in Business Administration (BBA); 41 students studying for an MSc in International Hospitality Business (IHB); and 31 studying for an MSc in Real Estate, Finance and Hotel Development (REFHD).

3 The impact of COVID-19 has diminished but has continued to have an impact. Undergraduate students keen to take advantage of the opportunity to exchange between the campuses have faced lockdown restrictions, such as travel bans or challenges securing visas. New students due to begin courses in autumn 2021 were scheduled to begin courses two weeks later than returning students to allow for increased time to organise documentation impacted upon by Covid delays.

4 GIHE is focused upon consolidating the staffing structure, with two new appointments made since the last review, designed to provide additional academic leadership; and with an aim to continue to increase permanent faculty during 2022. In addition, the role of the Senior Assistant Registrar has developed in order to support engagement between the UK and Swiss campuses, and a 0.5 Programme Co-ordinator post has been introduced to enhance administrative activities.

### Findings from the monitoring visit

5 The provider continues to make further progress against the action plan originally produced for the 2019 review. All approved academic policies have clearly stated implementation and revision dates but, at the time of the review, some of the policies and procedures were past the revision date (paragraph 7). The provider is proactive in identifying actions for the enhancement of its provision but it does not have a rolling summative action plan and the outcomes of actions are not always recorded (paragraph 9). Although there is no formal requirement from its awarding body to appoint an external examiner, the provider has appointed one and uses them to confirm its academic standards and to contribute to enhancement processes (paragraph 10).

6 At the annual monitoring visit in March 2021, the review team noted that the provider was making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the April 2019 Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers). All six areas of good practice identified in the 2019 review have been further developed and evaluated since the last monitoring visit.

7 There was a single recommendation arising from the 2019 review which was to ensure that all approved academic policies and procedures include clearly stated implementation and revision dates. This action was stated as completed by the target date of September 2019 and all policies and procedures are available to staff through the SharePoint application, MyGuidance. At the time of the desktop monitoring, some key documents shown on MyGuidance had expired - for example, the programme specifications and academic rules and regulations.

8 The affirmation noted in the 2019 review recognised the steps being taken to formalise the documentation for programme development, approval, monitoring and review. The provider reviewed its Academic Quality Framework which was approved by the Academic Board in November 2019 and implemented in 2020. The framework is currently undergoing a further review.

9 The provider is proactive in identifying actions for enhancement of its provision which are identified by its academic committees. Both undergraduate and postgraduate programme committees contain rigorous analysis of areas for improvement and clearly identify the actions required to enhance its provision. Actions are listed at the end of each section of the minutes alongside the person or body responsible for carrying them out; however, completion dates for actions are not recorded. Actions arising out of meetings are not routinely recorded at subsequent committee meetings. Since the completion of the action plan arising from the review of 2019, no new summative action plan has been produced by the provider.

10 Although there is no requirement from its validation organisation to appoint an external examiner, the provider has appointed a suitably qualified and experienced examiner in reflection of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (UKQC). The external examiner report of January 2021 commended the progress that the provider has made in developing its procedures and recording of those procedures as part of the transformation to a more formal approach of undertaking tasks. The provider makes a detailed response together with an action plan, in response to the external examiner's report.

11 Students regularly move between campuses making it problematic to disaggregate retention data; as a result, the provider calculates undergraduate retention using cumulative retention rates across all delivery centres. It reviews retention rates of the BBA students between Year 1 and 2, and Year 2 to 3. MSc retention across all programmes is determined using retention of students from academic semester 1 to semester 2. Programme committees attended by team members from all campuses review data on enrolment, retention, graduation and employment. Data is reviewed per course and per campus to assure consistency in the student experience throughout the provider.

12 During the Covid period the provider allowed students to defer placements which means that current retention statistics are not directly comparable to previous cohorts.

13 For the BBA Year 1 September 2020 cohort, the retention rate of 93% is above the GIHE cumulative since 2016 (89%), and above the retention rate recorded for the previous two semesters (91%). For Year 2 to 3, the retention for the same intake was 97% - above the cumulative at this level since 2016 (95%) and joint highest ever recorded for a cohort since 2018.

14 At master's level, the most recent retention recorded on the MSc IHB programme across GIHE global fell to 87%, but the cumulative retention rate for students for all intakes since spring 2018 remains high at 97%. The UK's only MSc REFHD programme saw a high retention rate of 93% for its first cohort moving from semester 1 to semester 2, with this remaining consistent for its second cohort returning in spring 2021 at 94%.

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

15 As an international provider of higher education, GIHE is guided by three main external reference points. Accreditation of programmes is by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE). The GIHE UK campus was subject to a NECHE accreditation visit in October 2019 with a further visit made to the Swiss campuses. The NECHE report identified a significant number of strengths. A small number of recommendations were made and appropriate action has been taken.

16 The provider also works within the Swiss National Standards for Higher Education institutions, which incorporate the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

17 There is no requirement under the American accreditation system to appoint external examiners. However, as GIHE is operating partly in the UK, it has appointed an external examiner to provide impartial and independent assessment of academic standards and the integrity of assessment. External examiner visits occur twice annually with on-campus meetings and a report produced following the final visit. In the most recent report, the external examiner commented positively on the transition to online study including both live and recorded lectures, and on the effectiveness of assessment and feedback to students.

18 The provider has not yet mapped its policies and procedures against the revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education although it indicates that it would be pleased to prioritise this. The provider states that programme modules are designed to reflect the QAA Subject Benchmark Statements for Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure; however, programme specifications available on MyGuidance do not make this explicit.

19 The provider engages with the wider academic community through the professional bodies - for example, the Institute of Hospitality within which staff and students actively participate.

## Background to the desk-based analysis

20 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 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 visit or review.

21 The desk-based analysis was carried out by Peter Hymans, Reviewer, and Nadine Baker, QAA Officer, on 10 June 2022.

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