



Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, June 2013

Annex 1: Heriot-Watt University International Study Centre

Section 1: Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the monitoring team concludes that Heriot-Watt University International Study Centre (HWISC) is making progress but further improvement is required following the May 2012 [Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight](#).

Section 2: Changes since the last QAA review

2 The only significant change in provision at HWISC since the QAA review in 2012 is an increase in student numbers from 89 to 197.

Section 3: Findings from the monitoring visit

3 HWISC is continuing to provide a high level of academic and pastoral support for students and opportunities for high-quality staff development. Staff continue to access the structured networking arrangements that are offered across the network of ISCs.

4 A Form of Variation to the original inter-institutional agreement states which institution is responsible for the academic standards of each programme. HWISC has produced a glossary of terms defining the meanings of academic standards-related terms and is applying these consistently in its documentation.

5 Work to align HWISC's assessment regulations with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) is ongoing. The assessment regulations are not yet fully communicated to students in writing. The Student Handbook sets out an abridged version of the regulations, but notable omissions include the compensation rules and information about the opportunity to restart the programme.

6 Information to students about progression requirements was not clear. The Pre-Masters handbook does not indicate that progression is at the discretion of the University. Information on the HWISC website about guaranteed progression from the ISC Certificate programme is potentially misleading. Students who pass the Certificate programme but do not achieve a minimum grade of 65 per cent are not guaranteed progression to the University. Prospective and current students are not informed in writing of the options that may be available to them in these circumstances. Students are informed in writing that a 'pass' grade in the Certificate means achievement of at least 40 per cent in each module, earning a total of 120 credits. However, student transcripts, while they record the marks achieved in each module, do not record the level and volume of credits earned and consequently their value as a record of study is limited. Bellerbys Educational Services (BES) procedures for checking and confirming the accuracy of information, prior to sign-off by the University, are not being implemented in full and rigorously at HWISC.

Section 4: The embedded colleges' use of external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education

7 The ISC has worked with the Quality Code in developing learning, teaching and assessment in English and mathematics and in introducing a more robust moderation process for oral assessments.

Section 5: Background to the monitoring visit

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

9 The monitoring visit was carried out by Alan Hunt, QAA Officer, and Dr Sylvia Hargreaves, Reviewer, on 23 April 2013.