



Educational Oversight-Exceptional Arrangements: report of the monitoring visit of International College Dundee, September 2021

Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that the International College Dundee (the College) is making acceptable progress since the [June 2020 monitoring review](#).

The impact of COVID-19

2 As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the review was conducted online and included meetings with senior management teams, teaching staff and students. The scope of the evidence considered, and the nature of the judgements 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.

Changes since the last QAA monitoring visit

3 At the time of the virtual visit there were 139 students on Scottish Level 7 programmes in Art and Design, Business, Law and Social Science, Nursing, Life and Biomedical Science, Engineering, Computing and Level 10 Masters programmes in Business, Design, Nursing and Health, Education and Social Science. This is a slight reduction from the 167 students enrolled in 2019-20 due to COVID-19 restrictions. There are 27 staff.

4 The College was established in 2016 through a collaborative agreement between the Oxford International Education Group (OIEG) and the University of Dundee. All the college programmes are validated by the University of Dundee (UoD) with progression from these to programmes at the University. There have been no material changes since the last monitoring review. The two recommendations from the previous review have been addressed and the two areas of good practice have been developed.

Findings from the monitoring visit

5 The outcome of this desk-based review was reached after reviewing the Annual Monitoring Return and accompanying evidence and after online meetings with the College Director, members of the college staff and students. The review in June 2019 identified two areas of good practice and two recommendations, all of which had been addressed and further developed at the time of the 2020 virtual monitoring visit (paragraph 9).

6 The College has well-developed mechanisms for the quality assurance and enhancement of its provision. The College works closely with the University of Dundee to enhance the student experience, maintain standards and enable the students' transition onto their degree programmes (paragraphs 12; 13; 14).

7 The College has used its own mapping of its provision to the revised Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) to generate a number of actions to enhance the student experience. It has also used the outcome of a university-led periodic programme review to initiate enhancement actions. Additionally, the College creates enhancement actions from a number of activities including module reviews, programme quality enhancement reviews and exam board reports (paragraphs 12; 21).

8 The action and enhancement plans arising from the above sources are in a variety of formats and do not always include target dates for completion or responsibilities for oversight of the actions but do result in considerable enhancement of the learning provision (paragraph 14).

9 The College continues to build on the elements of good practice identified by the review of June 2019 and recognised in the 2020 monitoring visit report. The roles of the Link Tutors have been developed further to include supporting students after they have progressed to UoD programmes. The recommendations received by the College in the June 2019 review were to ensure that external examiners have oversight of course work assignments and examination questions, and that the Staff Student Liaison Committee should consider the external examiner reports. Both these actions had been fully addressed by the College by the time of the 2020 monitoring visit.

10 As reported at the last monitoring review, all learning and teaching in the College was suspended from the week commencing 16 March 2020. An online learning environment was created by 30 March 2020 in order that students could continue with the further 10 or 20 weeks necessary for them to successfully complete their studies.

11 Since the last virtual monitoring visit, the College returned briefly to an on-campus/blended learning environment between October and December 2020 when students were offered dual delivery options. For the remainder of the 2020-21 academic year classes again reverted to online only. During this period and to date, much of the College's enhancement activity has been focused on the enhancement of its online learning.

12 The College has developed enhancement actions from a number of sources. The College's mapping of its provision against the revised Quality Code identified a number of enhancement activities including the appointment of an English and Digital Education lead tutor, involving university school teams as critical friends in the programme review process and the introduction of termly College Director meetings with student cohorts. Enhancement actions are reviewed at monthly management meetings.

13 The College has responded robustly to the University's Periodic Programme Review by addressing each point with a detailed explanation of the actions it has taken. For example, the College has recently completed a review of learning outcomes in the module specifications to ensure they reflect appropriate level descriptors.

14 Enhancement actions are also identified at committee meetings including Exam Boards, Link Tutor meetings, and Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC). However, the format of the action plans is not consistent across the College and the actions do not always record timescales for completion or responsibilities for oversight. Students were not all aware of the activity of the SSLC during the last academic year.

15 Despite the difficulties resulting from having to change quickly to online learning from March 2020 onwards, the retention rate remains good. Of the 41 students enrolled in the 2017-18 cohort, 37 (90%) completed the course. Of the 64 students enrolled in the 2018-19 cohort, 56 (88%) were retained. For the 2019-20 cohort, 167 enrolled with 148

(89%) being retained. The 2020-21 cohort recruited 139 students with 115 (83%) being retained.

16 High achievement rates are evident across cohorts for students completing their programmes. Achievement of those that complete their programmes is also good with 37 students (100%) in the 2017-18 cohort; 55 (98%) in 2018-19; and 135 (91%) in 2019-20 - the latter being affected by the change to online learning. Achievement figures for the 2020-21 cohort were not finalised at the time of the virtual monitoring visit.

17 The one-term IIM programme of the 2019-20 cohort had lower retention and achievement rates than other programmes. This was partly due to a lack of engagement and low English skills. This was discussed at the January 2020 Exam Board as well as with colleagues in the University and Oxford International Education Group. As a result, admissions requirements for the programme were increased to require evidence of English level at IELTS 6.0 for the one term IIM programme.

18 As the objective of the majority of students is to progress to the UoD, the College monitors the progress of students after they have completed their programmes. The first cohort of IS1 students graduated from the University in July 2021 with a good standard of results being achieved. For this 2017-18 cohort, two ICD graduates received first-class degrees from the School of Life Sciences and a further nine received upper second-class degrees from various schools. The remainder received lower second-class degrees. Overall retention of the 22 students who continued to the University in 2018-19 is 82% from point of progression; 17 have completed, one student remains on course, one further student is intercalating, and three students withdrew. Students all stated that completing the programme with the College before entering the main university provision enabled them to engage with their studies more positively than if they had direct entry.

19 Of the 139 student enrolments in 2020-21, 18 students have already progressed onto the University of Dundee programmes.

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

20 As described in previous reports, the College continues to align with the requirements of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework, AQA subject descriptors, the Common European Framework of Reference, QAA Subject Benchmarks and the International English Language Testing System. These are used to inform the development and management of all programmes at the College which is reflected in the programme and module documentation. All programmes are subject to validation by the University of Dundee. In April 2019, the College took part in the Interim Periodic Programme Review by the University which resulted in a report and subsequent action plan. The College was asked to ensure its learning outcomes reflect SCQF level descriptors; in response the College has reviewed all its module specifications.

21 The College's mapping against the revised Quality Code for Higher Education has been developed further since the last monitoring visit. The ICD Mapping Quality Code and Action Plan demonstrates consideration of the Quality Code which informs and guides teaching and learning within the College. The Action Plan is reviewed monthly at management meetings and used to bring together actions and evidence of practice from the College's range of review and monitoring processes.

22 Some college developments mentioned in the College Mapping Quality Code and Action Plan are informed by QAA Scotland documents such as *Student Transitions and Support: A Scan of International Practice* (July 2021).

Background to the monitoring visit

23 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.

24 The monitoring visit was carried out by Peter Hymans, Reviewer, and Millard Parkinson, QAA Officer, on 28 September 2021.

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