



## Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of INTO Manchester, May 2019

### Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that INTO Manchester (the Centre) is making acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the May 2018 [Higher Education Review \(Alternative Providers\)](#).

### Changes since the last QAA review visit

2 There are 129 students based at the two INTO Centres in Manchester and London: 106 at INTO Manchester (82 on a Level 4 International Year One course (IYO) and 24 on a Pre-Master's (PMC) course); and 23 based at INTO London (12 on an International Year One course and 11 on three different Pre-Master's courses). From January 2019, an additional site in London provides overspill teaching space for INTO London and is a short walk from their main premises. There has been a change of Centre Director at INTO London and interim arrangements are in place.

### Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The Centres are making acceptable progress in developing the feature of good practice and in addressing the affirmation arising from the 2018 Higher Education Review (Alternative Providers) (HER (AP)). This is explored further in paragraphs 4 and 5. Their admissions and assessment processes remain consistent with those in place at the time of the previous HER (AP). The Centre reports good progress against the milestones it set itself, though most were scheduled for completion after this annual monitoring visit.

4 Good practice in the area of student support identified in 2018 has been further enhanced with the new role of Arabic Support Officer (at INTO Manchester). This was consolidated by the provision of additional shared training for academic and student services staff on how Learner Support can help struggling students and by continued regular meetings for staff working in different teams (academic and student services) to ensure effective holistic support for students.

5 The Centre has followed through with plans to ensure consistency in the design of assessment briefs, as required by the affirmation in the 2018 HER (AP) report. Assessment briefs are confirmed between the Programme Manager and subject teacher and added to the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) at the relevant time and the Assessment Schedule is also posted to the VLE and discussed at programme coordination meetings.

6 INTO Manchester has the opportunity to provide feedback on syllabi, tight deadline and entry requirements to Northern Consortium United Kingdom (NCUK) through markers' reports. It notes that it has also been able to contribute to NCUK's Digitalisation Project and that discussions are underway with NCUK about publishing the Admissions Appeals procedure. The Learning and Teaching Leadership Group has continued to lead on taking forward a range of enhancements most recently in the area of peer observations. The Centre has strengthened its dissemination of Staff-Student Liaison Committee discussions

and plans on implementing an action tracker. Both centres report that they will be consulting students on the merit of representation on Academic Boards and the Joint Quality Committee.

7 In addition to the annual monitoring requirements of its awarding bodies (NCUK and the University of Gloucestershire), INTO Manchester collates its action plans into an annual Academic Development Plan which is discussed at the Learning and Teaching Group, cascaded to programme coordination meetings and monitored at Academic Board. For INTO London, the annual Academic Development Plan is discussed at an all-staff meeting, then monitored at Academic Board. INTO Manchester plans to create a similar single Centre Development Plan.

8 The Joint Quality Committee Terms of Reference have been amended to include consideration of the outcome of appeals and complaints and will be discussed for the first time in July 2019. The Public Information Statement has been reviewed with no substantive changes found to be needed.

9 The Centre continues to operate the same recruitment, selection and admissions policies and procedures that it did in 2018, at the time of the HER (AP), which confirmed that there were 'transparent and reliable admissions processes in place which are inclusive and underpinned by appropriate structures to operate and manage them'. These include centralised INTO Global and Admissions Recruitment and Admissions Teams overseeing the 31 regional offices and working with agents and a UK Central Admissions Team and Central Enrolment Services, both of which allow for consistency of approach. A Portal provides a one-stop shop of information for Education Advisers. Information about programme content and entry requirements, including English Language, are published on the website. In addition to meeting Secure English Language Test (SELT) requirements, students are tested again for their language ability. Qualifications are checked using NARIC, European Commission and UNESCO guidance and those with non-standard qualifications are checked by local centres and cross-checked by NCUK (for Manchester) and the University of Gloucestershire (for London). Education Counsellors evaluate genuine intention to study during the sales and advisory stages, and students from higher risk countries - in terms of visa irregularities - together with those who apply directly to the UK Enrolment Services, are interviewed. The Centre accepts students aged 16 and 17 years and additional measures are in place to ensure that they are safeguarded, as described in INTO London's Local Operational Manual and within the parameters of their Safeguarding Policy. There is currently only one student aged under 18 studying (at INTO Manchester). NCUK and the University of Gloucestershire approve the brochures for the programmes.

10 The website was clear and helpful apart from a couple of errors around nomenclature which have been corrected. Students report that the Admissions process, together with the information that they received from INTO, was clear and helpful.

11 The Centre continues to operate the same assessment policies and procedures that it did in 2018 at the time of the last HER (AP), which confirmed that there were 'valid and reliable assessment arrangements that allow students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes'.

12 At INTO Manchester, NCUK, as the awarding body, write the exams for administration, with the marking and appropriate second marking being undertaken by the Centre. Programme teams follow guidance provided by NCUK in their academic handbook, programme frameworks and module syllabuses which are referred to in programme handbooks. Feedback on assessment processes is collated from Centre markers' reports, external examiners, team meetings and programme committee meetings and incorporated into the NCUK Annual Report.

13 INTO London follows the University of Gloucestershire procedures for marking, moderation and external examination. INTO London staff conduct the marking and the relevant proportion of assessments are second marked before other checks are conducted by the University partner, and a sample is considered by the University's external examiners. Link tutors from the University of Gloucestershire provide feedback on marking to module tutors at INTO London and tutors respond to any issues raised. Students report that they find guidance on assessment clear and helpful at both centres.

14 INTO Manchester follows the NCUK Academic Misconduct Policy, embeds training on avoiding academic misconduct in its teaching, uses anti-plagiarism software for electronic submission of coursework, and interviews students about whom there is any concern. INTO London also uses anti-plagiarism software, interviews students about whom there is any academic concern and has a quarterly academic offence board to discuss cases. Both centres report low numbers of academic offences. Students reported that they were clear about all matters relating to academic misconduct and gave an example of the procedure in practice.

15 There are 21 academic staff (12 full-time) at INTO Manchester and 14 academic staff (10 full-time) at INTO London who teach on the IYO and PMC and other INTO foundation-year courses at both of these Centres. Staff expertise is tailored to the level of study at which they teach. In 2018-19, there were two intakes a year - September and January - for both courses at both centres. There have been low student numbers on all cohorts and both courses at INTO London for the previous three years (three to eight students) and higher numbers at INTO Manchester (25 and 57 for the International Year One; 8 and 16 for the Pre-Master's).

16 The Centre admits student cohorts in September and January. Retention rates for 2017-18 at INTO Manchester are: Pre-Master's 80% and 86% (September cohort - 15 students and January cohort - 21 students); IYO 91% and 89% (September cohort - 53 students and January cohort - 27 students). Pass rates for 2017-18 at INTO Manchester are: Pre-Masters 100% and 83% (September cohort - 15 students and January cohort - 21 students); IYO 69% and 63% (September cohort - 53 students and January cohort - 27 students). The Centre is aware that the pass rates on the International Year One are lower than they would wish and have reviewed and strengthened support for students (with a new Arabic tutor and training for staff) and also for teaching staff (induction, training and meetings). Students report good levels of support. NCUK have indicated to the Centre that they are considering whether the curriculum may need some adjustment.

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

17 Since the HER (AP) in 2018, NCUK has conducted an audit of the International Year One programme in May 2018 at INTO Manchester and confirmed the Centre maintained authorisation to continue delivering the programme. Recommendations included strengthening staff induction and reviewing the format and recording of staff meetings which the Centre has already actioned, drawing on good practice in its Pre-Master's course. INTO London underwent full educational oversight by the Independent Schools Inspectorate and this concluded that the Centre exceeded expectations and that quality, student welfare, governance and leadership were excellent. It recommended that the Centre improve the monitoring of teaching so that any variation in approach is recognised and addressed and the Centre has actioned this by recruiting to a senior teaching role with responsibility for teacher development to support teachers. The Centres have refreshed the mapping document which they use to track all references to the Quality Code for Higher Education included in previous reviews and monitoring visits since 2014.

## Background to the monitoring visit

18 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.

19 The monitoring visit was carried out by Sally Bentley, Reviewer, and Ian Welch, QAA Officer, on 7 May 2019.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB  
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel 01452 557050  
Web [www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)