

## Annual Monitoring: desk-based analysis of INTO Scotland LLP trading as INTO Glasgow Caledonian University, February 2020

### Outcome of the desk-based analysis

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and through monitoring of documentary evidence, the review team concludes that INTO Glasgow Caledonian University (INTO GCU; the Centre) is continuing to maintain academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities since the November 2018 [Educational Oversight-Exceptional Arrangements review](#).

### Changes since the last QAA review

2 INTO GCU, an embedded college of Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU; the University), within the context of its joint venture partnership with INTO University Partnerships (IUP), continues to offer pathway programmes leading to GCU awards in Business and Management, Science, Computing, Engineering and Built Environment. These include International Foundation programmes which lead to Year 1 or 2 of a four-year undergraduate degree; International Diploma programmes which lead to Year 3 of a four-year undergraduate degree; and Pre-Master's and Graduate Diploma programmes which lead to postgraduate study.

3 Student numbers in the Centre fluctuate throughout the academic cycle. In December 2019, there were 71 student enrolments. The Centre's data shows that recruitment to the range of programmes has remained stable while retention and completion rates have been maintained or, in some cases, improved (see paragraph 8). However, given consistently low recruitment to Diploma, Graduate Diploma and Pre-Master's programmes with routes to the School of Engineering, Computing and Built Environment, and following consultation between the University School, INTO GCU and IUP, it has been decided to close this provision (foundation pathways remain open).

4 There are currently five staff classified as senior managers (including the Centre Director), 16 academic staff (six full-time, seven fractional and three hourly-paid), and eight staff in student support roles.

### Findings from the desk-based analysis

5 The Centre is continuing to maintain academic standards and the quality of student learning opportunities since the November 2018 review under Educational Oversight (Exceptional Arrangements). Following the review, INTO GCU produced an Action Plan identifying progress with the two areas of good practice and the one recommendation indicated in the review findings. Developments are explored further in paragraphs 6-8. The Centre reports good progress against the milestones it set itself.

6 The review identified the wide-ranging and highly-effective support mechanisms provided by the Centre and the University, which enable students to develop their full potential, as good practice. The Centre and the University have continued to operate within the existing joint venture structures while also reflecting on opportunities to enhance the

arrangements. This is being done by placing student support mechanisms - including recruitment and admissions, student services, welfare and accommodation support, academic support and transitional support - as a standing item at meetings of the Joint Academic Liaison Group (JALG). The success indicators used include student satisfaction surveys and completion and progression statistics. It had also been agreed that the Centre should share good practice and explore opportunities for enhancement at the University's Learning and Student Experience week. It was decided that this was not possible in 2018-19 and it is now being planned for the 2020-21 academic year. The second area of good practice was the positive and effective relationship between the Centre and the University across all aspects of the partnership, which enhances the student experience and assures standards. The partnership continues and is kept under review at JALG meetings and through the report of the Centre Director to meetings of the Joint Venture Board. Good practice has also been shared within the IUP at the quarterly meetings of INTO Centre Academic Directors. The success of this initiative has resulted in positive collaboration between other university partners and the IUP and the establishment of a working group between three Centres working towards a QAA Annual Return submission.

7 The 2018 review recommended that it was desirable for INTO GCU to develop staff understanding of the role of the Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) in informing regulation, policy and practice. This has resulted in four actions. First, the Centre has facilitated INTO GCU staff having access to, and attending, university Continuing Professional Development updates on the Quality Code. In addition, staff have been directed to watch relevant video content on the QAA website. The second action was the provision of a glossary of key terminology. On reflection, however, it was decided that this would be better achieved by the production of a mapping document indicating how the various functions of the Centre can be mapped to the Quality Code. This document has only recently been shared with staff so that its effectiveness has not yet been evaluated. A third planned action was the addition of reference to the Quality Code in the Staff Handbook and the incorporation of an introduction to the Quality Code during staff induction. While this latter action has been achieved, the change to the Staff Handbook has not yet been implemented as the document is an INTO-wide production and is currently under review. The fourth action identified has been to create a more comprehensive Admissions Policy which is explicitly aligned with the Quality Code. A revised admissions policy has been drafted by IUP and has been circulated to all Centre Directors for final approval.

8 Completion and retention rates across all programmes remain strong, though those for programmes with small numbers (two students in some cases) including the International Diploma in Engineering and the International Graduate Diploma in Engineering, are disproportionately affected if, and when, a student fails. The overall pass rate for 2018-19 was higher than in previous years with a 100% success rate in three of the five International Foundation programmes. A lower pass and completion rate of 55% on the International Foundation Science programme has been acted upon, with the delivery of some modules being made 'long thin' and the addition of more tutorials in the delivery of the programme. JALG considers programme completion rates and is kept informed of student progression to GCU.

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

9 The Centre has recently completed an amended and comprehensive mapping document which serves as a quick reference guide for all staff and stakeholders on how INTO GCU provision is aligned to the revised Quality Code. With respect to Expectations for standards, INTO GCU continues to work closely with the University and the effective arrangements operating at the time of the 2018 review - both at the level of the Joint Venture with the University and at IUP level - ensure that the standards of the awards are secure.

10 Quality Code Core practices continue to be reviewed across functions including recruitment and admissions, student welfare and wellbeing, academic support, transitional support and teaching and learning. Results over a three-year period from the INTO Annual Student Experience Survey compare INTO GCU with the UK INTO network and provide a positive evaluation of INTO GCU students' academic and wider experience. The data is reviewed for opportunities to enhance the student experience. Programme design is annually reviewed via IUP for English programmes and with GCU academic schools for pathway programmes. The Centre continues to use various mechanisms for gathering student feedback including INTO-wide student surveys, the University's module evaluation questionnaires, the election of class representatives and via a student President and Vice-President. It has decided to replace its 'mid-term survey' for programme feedback on the pathway courses - where student engagement with the survey was limited - with focus groups. INTO GCU teaching and support staff continue to have access to all the university facilities and resources. In collaboration with the University, a peer observation scheme has been introduced. Thus far, feedback for participants has been verbal but more formal recording of outcomes is under consideration.

11 In terms of other external reference points, external examiner reports for modules on pathway programmes are positive, responded to effectively, and shared with staff and students. For its English language provision, the Centre has made progress with the actions outlined in its British Council Action Plan

## **Background to the desk-based analysis**

12 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 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 process or review.

13 The desk-based analysis was carried out by Professor Alan Jago, Reviewer, and Dr Neil Casey, QAA Officer in February 2020. No meetings were held with students or staff, and the conclusions presented in this report are based on the analysis of documentary evidence submitted by the provider.

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