

Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of Foundation for International Education, February 2023

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 Foundation for International Education (FIE) is making commendable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the April 2022 [monitoring report](#).

Changes since the last QAA review/monitoring visit

2 The Foundation for International Education (FIE) has operated since 1998. It is a private, independent, non-profit international educational organisation, offering educational programmes for academic credit to students enrolled at accredited universities in the United States. FIE is based in London and also has provision in Dublin and Amman. FIE has a clear mission and set of underpinning values which guide all areas of its work.

3 FIE works with over 50 partner and affiliated colleges and universities. Partnership arrangements are formalised through the development of a Memorandum of Understanding. FIE also has two Schools of Record (Drexel University and Marist College). Most of the partner universities offer their own academic credit for the courses studied at FIE, but where this is not the case, the credit is awarded by one of the Schools of Record.

4 Student numbers have increased following the COVID-19 pandemic but have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. Staffing levels have been maintained and are sufficient for the student enrolment.

5 There have been no changes since the review of 2021.

Findings from the monitoring visit

6 The monitoring team scrutinised the Annual Monitoring Return and the action plan, together with the supporting evidence submitted by FIE. Online meetings were also held with a small group of students and a group of teaching and administration staff. The monitoring team considers that FIE is making commendable progress in respect of the actions arising from the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight (RSEO) report of 2021 and issues arising from its own quality assurance processes.

7 The development of online internships identified in the original action plan is now less of a priority as students return to classroom-based teaching (paragraph 9

8 In the RSEO Review which concluded in 2021, the review team identified the innovative and flexible approach to the continued development and delivery of programmes, and the provision of excellent and effective support for students and staff, since the start of the pandemic, as being good practice. The review team made no recommendations. Through its action plan, FIE has continued to enhance its innovative and flexible approach to the continued development and delivery of programmes, and the provision of excellent and effective support for students and staff.

9 One of the actions raised in the action plan was to develop further the promotion of online internships. Since in-person programmes have resumed, interest in online programmes has reduced but the organisation continues to offer the online version and may further develop it for students from other markets. As part of the response to the identified good practice, the second action was to assess operational needs to facilitate flexible options for staff. In 2022, a survey of administrative staff was undertaken by an intern to evaluate the current appraisal scheme. Following the report, FIE leadership decided that no changes were required but that the annual appraisal process would be reviewed again in 2023.

10 FIE has rigorous quality assurance processes which enable it to evaluate its

In 2021, only three students did not complete their programme - giving a retention rate of 99% - and all online students completed their programme. Again, all students who completed were successful in their studies.

16 The calendar year 2022 saw a return to normal recruitment patterns across all programmes. Only three of these students undertook their programme online. The fall cohort of 2022 also saw the first recruitment of students to a new first-year programme with students studying with FIE in London for a full academic year. Retention in 2022 was high with 99% of students completing or continuing their studies, with success rates above 99% on individual subjects.

17 FIE note that the high recruitment of 2022 may have been due to pent up demand following the pandemic, and that combined with an expected demographic downturn in numbers of the university age population may mean that future recruitment is more challenging

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 Mr Peter Hymans, Reviewer, and Dr Margaret Johnson, QAA Officer, on 8 February 2023.

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