

Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) of GIHE UK Limited

June 2023

Contents

About this review	1
Key findings	2
Judgements	2
Good practice	2
Recommendations	2
Affirmation of action being taken	2
About the provider	3
Explanation of findings	4
1 Commentary: The provider satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards, as set out in contractual arrangements with its academic partners	4
2 Judgement: The qual 1 TfeJtsAace qe(t)-6.6n(t)4.2 (g opppr)-5.9 parlitirs	4

About this review

This is a report of a Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at GIHE UK Limited. The review took place from 13 to 14 March 2023 and was conducted by a team of three reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Barbara Howell (Reviewer)
- Brenda Eade (Reviewer)
- Mishal Saeed (Student reviewer).

The main purpose of the review was to investigate the higher education provision and to make judgements as to whether or not academic standards and quality meet UK expectations. These expectations (and the associated Core and Common practices) are the statements in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code)¹ setting out what all UK higher education providers expect of themselves and of each other, and what the general public can therefore expect of them.

In Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) the QAA review team:

- makes judgements on
 - the quality of student learning opportunities
- provides a commentary on academic standards
- makes recommendations
- identifies features of good practice
- affirms action that the provider is taking or plans to take.

The QAA website gives more information [about QAA](#)² and explains the method for [Higher Education Review \(Foreign Providers\)](#).³ For an explanation of terms see the [Glossary](#).⁴

Key findings

Judgements

The QAA review team formed the following judgements about the higher education provision.

- The quality of student learning opportunities meets UK expectations.

The QAA review team also provided a commentary on academic standards.

- The provider satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards, as set out in contractual arrangements with its academic partners.

Good practice

The QAA review team identified the following features of good practice .

- The support and guidance for international students who have a delayed start including recording of lectures for the first four weeks (Core practice Q1).
- The preparing of students for the real world, providing practical work experience in placements and internships and learning opportunities with Switzerland (Core practice Q9).
- The Institute's approach to providing comprehensive feedback on assessment through a variety of mechanisms (Core practice Q9).

Recommendations

Explanation of findings

This section explains the review findings in greater detail.

1 Commentary: The provider satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards, as set out in contractual arrangements with its academic partners

Findings

1.1

2 Judgement: The quality of student learning opportunities

Core practice (Q1): The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.

Findings

2.1 GIHE sets out its admissions procedures in its Academic Catalogue and on its [website](#). This includes English language requirements and procedures for admission with prior learning. Specific criteria for admission to each programme are included in the Programme Specifications. The GIHE Admissions Commission (consisting of the Managing Director, the Academic Dean, the Dean of Students, and Director of Global Enrolment), implemented in 2019, is responsible for overseeing the admissions process. Changes to the admissions criteria for a programme are proposed to the Academic Board for approval. Open days (both virtual and on campus) are held to provide further information to potential students. Applicants are required to attend a compatibility interview and to submit a study plan and post-study plan with their application. Global Education Counsellors provide guidance and support for students during the admissions process. Procedures are in place for students to appeal against an admissions decision. This approach supports a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system, and would allow the Core practice to be met. pp

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students and those joining late, lectures are recorded and uploaded to the virtual learning platform during the first four weeks of each programme. Students indicated that this had enabled them to effectively participate in their classes, even when their start date had been delayed. The review team considers that the support and guidance for international students who have a delayed start including recording of lectures for the first four weeks (Q1) is an area of good practice.

2.7 Online learning courses to prepare students for their studies are available to students who have been enrolled on the MSc programmes. GIHE also offers the Hospitality Immersion Programme (HIP) which is delivered in Switzerland and is designed for students who need to gain some experience of the hospitality industry before commencing the MSc International Hospitality Business (IHB) programme.

2.8 Students indicated that they are asked to provide feedback on the application and admissions process during induction and through surveys. GIHE uses the outcomes of the surveys to continually improve the admissions process. Changes to entry criteria are considered by the Academic Board, and the November 2022 meeting of the Board approved changes to the entry criteria for the preparation year of the Bachelor's in Business Administration (BBA) to ensure they aligned with the criteria for the first year of the BBA programme.

2.9 The review team confirms that GIHE UK's admissions system is inclusive, reliable and consistent, with effective procedures in place for assessing applications and making decisions. The Institute takes steps to ensure that all applications are processed efficiently and fairly, and that decisions are communicated to applicants in a timely manner. Transparency in the admissions process is affected by providing clear information about entry requirements and selection criteria on the website, enabling potential applicants to make informed decisions.

2.10 The review team concludes that the Core practice (Q1) is met and the associated risk is low.

Core practice Met
Level of risk: Low

Core practice (Q2): The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.

Findings

2.11 GIHE UK offers the following higher education courses pertaining to the hospitality and luxury industries:

- BBA International Hospitality Business (BBA)
- MSc in International Hospitality Business (MSc IHB)
- MSc in Real Estate, Finance and Hotel Development (MSc REFHD)

2.12 There are two intakes for the BBA and MSc IHB in spring and autumn, and one intake for MSc REFHD in autumn; details of student numbers are provided with optimal class sizes of approximately 30 students.

2.16 GIHE UK's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise, as evidenced by the External Examiner Policy which provides a summary of the role of external examiners, highlighting that they will 'evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the quality assurance system, and review academic standards'. An external examiner report submitted in February 2022 provided positive feedback regarding the BBA and the MSc IHB, noting that assessments were found to be rigorous and challenging, and suggesting more diversification of assessment methods, noting that there was too much focus on examination. The teaching staff confirmed that the external examiner feedback was being taken on board. The senior staff also acknowledged that the assessment strategy was being reviewed to introduce a range of assessment methods.

2.17 GIHE UK has the following arrangements in place to ensure that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with national qualifications frameworks. The following external reference points are used:

- New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) Standards for Accreditation
- QAA Subject Benchmark Statements
- Swiss National Standards for higher education institutions, which incorporate the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

2.18 The review team noted that the GIHE was undertaking an exercise to map their
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Core practice (Q3): The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high- quality academic experience.

Findings

2.24 GIHE recognises that a commitment to providing a high-quality experience can only be achieved by having a team of highly qualified and skilled staff members. To achieve this, the first stage is to have a rigorous recruitment process that ensures that all staff members meet the required qualifications and experience for their roles. Following appointment, GIHE

Core practice (Q4): The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

Findings

2.33 GIHE is committed to delivering a high-quality academic experience for its students by providing sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources, and student support services. This commitment is demonstrated through the GIHE strategy to develop and invest in world-class facilities to support the learning of their students, and to review and implement facilities to support the growth of the Institute.

2.34 In terms of physical resources, GIHE consists of three campuses: GIHE Glion, GIHE Bulle, and GIHE London campus. The London campus is located on the University of Roehampton's campus in a dedicated building, comprising six classrooms with state-of-the-art multimedia equipment, study areas,6 (6 (u8TJ 0 Tc b.3 (t)4Tj -0.002 Tc -0.1-6 (en)10-l)-6.6 (H)Tc b.3 7

2.41 Student support is managed through one-to-one meetings, class representative meetings and RAG meetings. Class representative

Core practice (Q5): The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

Findings

2.45 GIHE has processes in place to engage students in the quality of their education experience. Student feedback mechanisms are set out in the Student Feedback Policy and Procedure, and include the student app, through student ambassadors, via email, in one-to-one meetings, and through surveys and focus groups. Monthly meetings are held with class representatives and members of the Undergraduate Academic Student Council (UASC). Action taken as a result of student feedback is reported to students through the 'You said and we listened campaign' Student representatives are elected by their peers and GIHE has a 'Student-Led Initiative' policy. The processes in place are designed to provide an effective system for student engagement.

2.46 The review team scrutinised the policies and procedures relating to student engagement, including the roles and responsibilities of student representatives and student ambassadors, the outcomes of surveys, and minutes of meetings of USAC and postgraduate student representatives. The team considered the quality cycle, studied the report from the Lead Student Representative (LSR), held meetings with the LSR and with students from a range of programmes, and met with senior management and academic and support staff. From the evidence provided and discussions with staff and students, the review team confirms that GIHE has effective processes in place to encourage and support student engagement in the quality of the education experience.

2.47 GIHE provides a range of opportunities for students to engage in the management of the quality of their learning experience and the academic governance of the Institute. This includes formal monthly meetings between the Senior Leadership Team and representatives from the master's programmes and the USAC. Student representatives are elected by their peers and are members of the programme committees. Students indicated that they also had informal one-to-one meetings with their lecturers, programme leaders and programme coordinators. As a result of student feedback, an 'open door' policy has been established, post-Covid, enabling students to give immediate feedback to their lecturers and programme leaders.

2.48 Student ambassadors, selected through an interview process, represent GIHE at open days and in the press. The Senior Leadership Team meets with them monthly to help to ensure openness and effective representation of the Institute.

2.49 The Student Governance Association (SGA) represents students on all non-academic matters and is facilitated by the Student Affairs Department. It hosts social activities and sporting events which are open to all students who are invited to suggest ideas for future activities. SGA members are elected by their fellow students at the start of each academic year. A number of initiatives have been implemented through the SGA including founding the Glion Television Network and bringing students together online during the Covid pandemic.

2.50 The students with whom the review team met,

surveys are analysed by the Institutional Effectiveness Department through a software tool known as B1. This enables comparisons to be made across semesters and different modules. The results of the surveys are generally positive, although students did give lower scores to the feedback they receive on their assessed work. GIHE has responded to this by providing feedback in a variety of media, including voice recordings. In his latest report, the external examiner commended the variety and depth of feedback provided.

2.52 Students indicated that they had not always been made aware of actions taken in response to their feedback. To address this, GIHE has developed the 'You said and we listened' process and now provides focused feedback on action taken which is specific to each student group, following the analysis of surveys and other forms of student feedback.

2.53 GIHE has a range of methods for actively engaging students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. These are effective and provide opportunities for all students to be involved in the enhancement of the quality of their educational experience. However, students are not actively involved in the academic governance of the Institute through membership and attendance of management committees such as Academic Board, and they do not currently feature in the documented quality cycle. The review tea2.6 (i)2.6'r6.6 (e) j -0.002 Tv10.6 (s)-2 (e a)Tw 2.-2 Tc -0 k (m)-5.9()JTJ 0 T-2 Tc0.5 (t)- 0 T

2.60 The review team finds that the Core practice (Q6) is not met due to the shortcomings of the complaints procedure which does not

Core practice (Q9): The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

Findings

2.63 The Academic Strategy highlights the provider's aim to develop graduates who are highly competent and exhibit integrity, leadership and entrepreneurial skills. This is demonstrated through the range of academic support mechanisms available to students to enable them to achieve successful outcomes, including one-to-one tutoring, study groups, academic coaching, and workshops aimed to develop students' study skills - such as time management, academic integrity and research skills - as well as focused support from the Library and IT services covering general support as well as specialist support such as Excel. The programme specifications evidence the support available to students. There is acknowledgement in students' feedback that there is a positive learning environment. This was confirmed by the students who were interviewed by the review team.

2.64 The provider has a student support team that aims to provide advice and guidance on personal and academic matters. The team is available to students throughout their studies and can help with issues such as homesickness, stress or financial difficulties.

2.65 The UG and PG Assessment Guides are a useful tool to inform students what to expect regarding their assessments, how to plan and prepare, as well as the assessment regulations and process for assessment results. There is an emphasis on developing students' graduate attributes as evidenced in the Graduate Assessment Guide. The assessment strategy highlighted in programme specifications and in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Handbook aims to progress student learning through the scaffolding of learning outcomes, and assessment designed to challenge students to develop their learning. The teaching staff who were interviewed by the review team, demonstrated a passion to enable students to succeed academically and professionally.

2.66 The provider has robust mechanisms to consider student feedback and student voice, as highlighted in the Lead Student Representative Report. There are opportunities for students to become student ambassadors, class representatives, flat representatives, and be involved in the Student Government Association. These roles will enable students' personal and professional development. A calendar of events is produced for students to engage in social activities outside their academic schedules, which will provide enrichment and foster a sense of community and belonging among students.

2.67 The provider has a dedicated career counselling team that provides students with advice and guidance regarding career planning. There are networking events with industry professionals on the Events Calendar, as well as guest speakers delivering sessions on programmes, providing students with opportunities to engage with industry experts and develop their employability skills.

2.68 The review team noted a range of employability resources and training events offered by the Careers Service for which students had provided positive feedback. It was highlighted that sessions were bespoke to the needs to students - for example, the 122j MSC Career preparation module was specifically designed to meet the needs and expectations of MSC students. Students have access to a job portal and utilise a number of resources providing information on placements - both of these they found to be relevant and useful.

2.69 Students who were interviewed by the review team, spoke positively about their experience on placements and particularly valued the opportunity to commence their studies in Switzerland. Therefore, the review team recognised as good practice, the preparing of students for the real world, providing practical work experience in placements and

Common practice (1): The provider reviews its Core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

Findings

2.72 The overarching strategic aims for GIHE align with the Governing Board and the Strategic Plan for 2022-2027. GIHE UK reviews the needs of the London campus and provides specific actions for the campus for the strategic aims. GIHE has robust internal quality assurance processes in place in addition to external reference points. These processes include regular reviews of the admissions process, programmes and courses, student feedback mechanisms, and continuous professional development for staff. These reviews ensure its process is fair, transparent and accessible to students.

2.73 Regular reviews of its academic programmes ensure that they are up-to-date and relevant to industry needs. These reviews involve input from academic staff, industry professionals and students. The Institute also solicits feedback from students, which is used to continuously improve its practices, with students encouraged to provide feedback on their

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2.79 The team confirmed those regular reviews to include course and programme design, and student feedback and representation. Course and programme design was found to look at the coherence and academic standards of programmes, end-of-semester feedback, an examination of current industry practices and the needs of industry in conjunction with liaising with counterparts in Switzerland. Student feedback is gained through course evaluations, student surveys and Academic Student Representation Meetings. Changes in response to student feedback are communicated back to the students through 'You said and we listened' campaigns, programme managers, and an exchange of emails. Student feedback then informs the annual Course Review and Evaluation Programme Based Statistics.

2.80 The annual cycle also includes external examiners who provide a crucial element of objectivity and externality in helping GIHE maintain academic standards. This is achieved through comments on the course descriptions, learning outcomes, assessment schemes and delivery mechanisms, through attendance at relevant Awards Boards and final reports. Responses to External Examiner Reports are fed to the Academic Board, with the team given an example of recommendation around the balance of exams and other forms of assessment. Periodic Programme Reviews take place on a cycle of not more than six years and cover aspects of teaching, learning and assessment, student experience, quality assurance and enhancement procedures, academic management, research and resources. GIHE addresses the expectations of external reviews as set out by NECHE, QAA's UK Quality Code, European expectations derived through the Bologna Process, and the development of the European Higher Education Area.

2.81 The Student Course Review and Evaluations (CRE), and the course internal verification (IV) process are also part of both full-time and part-time faculty members'

Common practice (2): The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.

Findings

2.83 GIHE has a range of external reference points which it uses in the management of the quality. The Institute is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education

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points which enable GIHE to identify emerging trends and skill requirements for future employees. This was confirmed by a meeting with members of the Alumni who indicated they had been well-prepared for their roles in industry.

2.90 From the evidence provided and discussions with stakeholders, the review team confirms that the provider's approach to managing quality effectively takes account of external expertise. Common practice (2) is met and the risk is low.

Common practice:	Met
Level of risk:	Low

Common practice (3): The provider engages students individually and

The quality of student learning opportunities: Summary of findings

2.99 GIHE UK's admissions system is inclusive, reliable, transparent and consistent, with effective procedures in place for assessing applications which are processed efficiently and fairly, and that decisions are communicated to applicants in a timely manner.

2.100 High-quality courses are designed by the parent institution, informed by current industry requirements and overseen by external bodies.

2.101 GIHE employs highly qualified academic staff with relevant industry experience and fully qualified and experienced support staff. Students commented favourably on effective communication and engagement with staff and good staff-student ratios. There is strong input from academic, technical and support staff at the Swiss campuses. However, there needs to be a more systematic approach to teaching observations.

2.102 The GIHE strategy to develop and invest (at)-6.7 83hi t t the6 (f)-u5c apprrh qu2-6.6 (3. (v)-2 (a)10.5 (

Glossary

User-friendly explanations of a wide range of terms can be found in the longer Glossary on the QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk/glossary

Academic standards

The standards set by degree-awarding bodies for their courses (programmes and modules) and expected for their awards. See also threshold academic standard.

Award

A qualification, or academic credit, conferred in formal recognition that a student has achieved the intended learning outcomes and passed the assessments required to meet the academic standards set for a programme or unit of study.

Awarding organisation

An organisation authorised to award a particular qualification; an organisation recognised by Ofqual to award Ofqual-regulated qualifications.

Blended learning

Learning delivered by a number of different methods, usually including face-to-face and e-learning (see technology enhanced or enabled learning).

Common practices

Practices included in the UK Quality Code that will be applied by providers in line with their missions, their regulatory context and the needs of their students. These are practices common to the underpinning of quality in all UK providers but are not regulatory

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e-learning

See technology enhanced or enabled learning.

Expectations

Statements in the Quality Code which clearly and succinctly express the outcomes providers should achieve in setting and maintaining the standards of their awards, and for managing the quality of their provision.

Flexible and distributed learning

A programme or module that does not require the student to attend classes or events at particular times and locations. See also distance learning .

Framework

A published formal structure. See also framework for higher education qualifications .

Framework for higher education qualifications

A published formal structure that identifies a hierarchy of national qualification levels and describes the general achievement expected of holders of the main qualification types at each level, thus assisting higher education providers in maintaining academic standards.

QAA publishes the following frameworks: *The Framework for the 21st Century*, *Philosophy of Education*, *IT and E-learning*, *Case Studies*.

Quality Code

Short term for the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, which is the UK-wide set of reference points for higher education providers (agreed through consultation with the higher education community, and published by QAA), which states the Expectations (and associated, applicable, Core and Common practices) that providers are required to meet.

Reference points

Statements and other publications that establish criteria against which performance can be measured.

Self-evaluation document

A report submitted by a higher education provider, assessing its own performance, to be used as evidence in a QAA review.

Subject Benchmark Statement

A published statement that sets out what knowledge, understanding, abilities and skills are expected of those graduating in each of the main subject areas (mostly applying to bachelor's degrees), and explains what gives that particular discipline its coherence and identity.

Technology enhanced or enabled learning (or e-learning)

Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology.

Threshold academic standard

The minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award. Threshold academic standards are set out in the national frameworks and Subject Benchmark Statements.

Virtual learning environment (VLE)

An intranet or password-only interactive website (also referred to as a platform or user interface) giving access to learning opportunities electronically. These might include such resources as course handbooks, information and reading lists; blogs, message boards and forums; recorded lectures; and/or facilities for online seminars (webinars).

Widening participation

Increasing the involvement in higher education of people from a wider range of backgrounds.

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