IES Abroad London

Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight Review by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

June 2016

Key findings

The QAA review panel considered evidence relating to the educational provision at IES Abroad London, both information supplied in advance and evidence gathered during the visits of the review itself. The review has resulted in the key findings stated in this section.

Judgements

The QAA review panel formed the following judgement about IES Abroad London:

> **confidence** can be placed in IES Abroad London's management of its responsibilities for the quality of the learning opportunities.

The QAA review panel also concluded that IES Abroad London satisfactorily manages its responsibilities for academic standards in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners.

Conclusion about public information

The QAA review panel concluded that:

> **reliance can** be placed on the information that IES Abroad London produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.

Good practice

The QAA review panel identified the following **features of good practice** at IES Abroad London:

> the comprehensive support for students, from the application process through to the completion of the programme (paragraph 2.11)
> the effective promotion of students' understanding of academic malpractice prior to arrival, during orientation and throughout the programmes (paragraph 2.13).

Recommendations

The QAA review panel makes the following recommendations to IES Abroad London.

The review panel considers it is **advisable** that IES Abroad London:

> ensure that internship supervisors are provided with appropriate support to fulfil their role, particularly in relation to assessment (paragraph 1.14).

The review panel considers that it would be **desirable** for IES Abroad London to:

> implement a formal process for assessment, which includes scrutiny of marks and a system of moderation (paragraph 1.12)
> continue to explore ways to increase the response rate for student surveys (paragraph 2.7)
> institute a more robust approach to staff appraisal and teaching observation (paragraph 2.10).

Context

IES Abroad London provides opportunities for students from American universities to undertake part of their degree programmes in the UK. It was established as a study abroad programme in 1972 and set up as a limited company in 1984. It is part of IES Abroad, one of the oldest and largest not-for-profit study abroad providers in the United States. IES Abroad was legally incorporated as the Institute for the International Education of Students in 1997 and has headquarters in Chicago. It works with over 200 US higher education institutions, who are either Members or Associate Members of the IES Abroad Consortium. All Members of the Consortium are required to meet the criteria set out in the Member Policy document, which include accreditation by st

Detailed findings about IES Abroad London

1 Academic standards

How effectively does IES Abroad London fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards?

1.1 The Centre Director at IES Abroad London has delegated responsibility for the

moderation of assessment (neither of assignments nor of marking). Consequently, there are no opportunities for teaching staff to compare marking standards and review student performance across units. Teaching staff indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to discuss the award of marks, particularly as they sometimes felt under pressure from students to inflate grades. It would be **desirable** for IES Abroad London to implement a formal process for assessment, which includes scrutiny of marks and a system of moderation.

1.13 Internships have grown substantially in numbers since the last RSEO visit, when there were only 12 students at any one time. By 2015 the numbers had increased to 80.

1.14 Students who undertake an internship as part of their programme are monitored and assessed by their internship supervisors, who award grades that contribute to at least 40 per cent of the mark for the unit. Although a brief general handbook is available for internship supervisors, IES Abroad London does not provide support and training for the supervisors to ensure that they have the necessary skills to effectively assess students to a common standard. It is **advisable** for IES Abroad London to ensure that internship supervisors are provided with appropriate support to fulfil their role, particularly in relation to assessment.

1.15 IES Abroad London has effective management and committee structures and clear guidelines for the management of academic standards. It uses a range of external reference points, including the Consortium Members. Standards are continually monitored through the various review processes. However, assessment procedures in respect of internal and external moderation, and the role of internship supervisors in the assessment process, require further development.

The review panel concluded that IES Abroad London satisfactorily manages its

2.4 The latest program review for IES Abroad

Recognition Scheme for Educatio

4 Action plan[3]

IES Abroad London action plan relating to the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight in June 2016						
Good practice	**Intended outcomes**	**Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes**	**Target date(s)**	**Action by**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation (process or evidence)**

orientation and throughout the programmes (paragraph 2.13).		standards				
Advisable	**Intended outcomes**	**Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes**	**Target date(s)**	**Action by**	**Reported to**	**Evaluation (process or evidence)**
The review panel considers that it is **advisable** for IES Abroad London to:						

institute a more robust approach to staff appraisal and teaching observation (paragraph 2.10).	Greater support and more feedback for staff and faculty	Staff appraisal, done once a year through Performance Reviews, will continue; with consistently scheduled meetings between staff and line manager to discuss work For faculty, a schedule will be developed for increased course observation and feedback sessions	1 year (July 2017)	All line managers on staff / Centre Director & Academic Programmes Manager	Centre Director & Programme Dean in Chicago	We will re-evaluate after one year based on feedback from staff and faculty regarding.

Glossary

This glossary explains terms used in this report. You can find a fuller glossary at: www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary. More details and formal definitions of key terms can be found in the handbook[4] for this review method.

Academic quality A comprehensive term referring to how, and how well, higher education providers manage teaching and learning opportunities to help students progress and succeed.

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

Credit(s) A means of quantifying and recognising learning, used by most institutions that provide higher education programmes of study, expressed as 'numbers of credits' at a specific level.

Enhancement The process by which higher education providers systematically improve the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

Good practice A process or way of working that, in the view of a QAA review panel, makes a particularly positive contribution to a higher education provider's management of academic standards and the quality of its educational provision. It is used as a technical term in QAA's review processes.

Learning opportunities The provision made for students' learning, including planned study, teaching, assessment, academic and personal support, and resources (such as libraries and information systems, laboratories or studios).

Learning outcome What a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completing a process of learning.

Programme (of study) An approved course of study which provides a coherent learning experience and normally leads to a qualification.

Public information Information that is freely available to the public (sometimes referred to as being 'in the public domain').

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

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[4] www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication/?PubID=202