

Educational Oversight-Exceptional Arrangements: desk-based analysis of INTO Stirling LLP, May 2024 -

Exceptional Arrangements review visit

Changes since the last QAA review

2 The Centre delivers a range of pathway programmes at SQCF Level 7-10 and International Foundation programmes at SCQF Level 7 focused on the academic skills and knowledge required for progression in specific subject clusters, including: business, finance, economics and marketing; media, humanities and social sciences; science; sport; computing; and engineering. At the time of the submission of the annual return, there were 181 students enrolled on the international foundation programmes, undergraduate degrees with international year one/two, international diplomas, postgraduate degrees with graduate diplomas, graduate diplomas and pre-master's programmes. There have been no changes in the programme offering since the last academic year.

Findings from the monitoring visit

3 The review team considered the annual return and supporting documentation, as well as clarifications requested by the team as part of a desk-based analysis. The Centre continues to implement the two features of good practice (paragraphs 4-6) and is making good progress in meeting the two desirable recommendations identified in the 2023 Educational Oversight-Exceptional Arrangements report (paragraphs 7-9). As evidenced in the

classroom observation training, attendance procedures and suicide intervention events. Staff have also attended University Learning and Teaching Committees to help build communities of practice. The provider is collating staff training requests to build a calendar of future events.

10 Enrolments for 2023-24 are currently 181 compared to the 214 enrolled in 2022-23 and 186 in 2021-22. Enrolments have been fairly consistent over the last few years. Focused conversion work has resulted in July and October intakes increasing by 34% overall on previous years. The Centre will be a 'push' centre for 2024. Push projects provide targets and focused support within key markets identified for their ability to support growth that aligns with University of Stirling goals and ambitions.

11 The data for 2022-23 shows that retention is 100% in 15 programmes. 11 programmes had retention rates ranging from 50% (one out of two students initially enrolled) for the Graduate Diploma in Science and Engineering and 95% (18 out of 19 students initially enrolled) for the undergraduate degree with International Year 2: Business, Finance, Marketing and Humanities. The International Foundation in Business, Finance and Marketing had a larger than usual number of students discontinuing (8 out of the 20 international students initially enrolled) due to non-compliance with UKVI attendance regulations, resulting in a retention rate of 64%. One programme - the Graduate Diploma in Media, Humanities and Social Sciences - had no students continuing with the programme (one student initially enrolled).

12 A comparison of retention between 2021-22 and 2022-23 shows that some programmes have seen an increase in retention. For example, the undergraduate degree with International Year 1: Sport, Science, Computing and Engineering has increased from 86% to 100%. Other programmes have seen a decrease in retention. This applies to the International Foundation in Business, Finance, Economics and Marketing which has seen a decline from 65% in 2021-22 to 60% in 2022-23; the International Foundation in Media, Humanities and Social Sciences which dropped from 100% to 89%; and the undergraduate degree with International Year 1: Business, Finance, Economics and Marketing which decreased from 73% to 59%. No retention rates were available yet for the 2023-24 cohorts.

13 In 2021-22, the overall average pass rate was 75% with 15 programmes seeing 100% pass rates. In 2022-23, the overall average pass rate was 85% with 17 programmes showing 100% pass rates. For the remaining programmes, the pass rate ranged between 57% (four out of seven students) for the International Foundation in Media, Humanities and Social Sciences and 94% (17 out of 18 students) for the undergraduate degree with International Year 2: Business, Finance, Marketing and Humanities. No pass rates were available yet for the 2023-24 cohorts.

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

14 The provider makes effective use of external reference points to meet UK expectations for higher education. While the University of Stirling has ultimate responsibility for the setting and management of academic standards, the provider is responsible for the delivery of the academic standards and operates within the University's governance and regulatory frameworks. The mapping within the provider's Quality Handbook relates to previous versions of the Quality Code for Higher Education and would .n40 Tc 9 rg/TT1 1 T76 -0.001 t14

All modules have a set of learning outcomes that are mapped to the appropriate SCQF level and for pre-master's at Level 9 and 10, depending on the modules and delivery mode. The module learning outcomes are also mapped onto each assignment on the module. A module checklist introduced in 2023-24 aligns to key requirements of the Quality Code on learning and teaching, and assessment. The provider's programmes are validated on a five-yearly basis, with the most recent revalidation process taking place in 2019. Revalidation is scheduled to take place in 2023-24. Proposed new programmes are approved by the University of Stirling's Curriculum Management Committee - a sub-committee of the Education and Student Experience Committee. Approval of new modules or module changes is managed by the relevant University Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee following their endorsement by the provider's Learning and Teaching Committee.

16 The provider continues to use external examiners as external reference points when reviewing the standards of its provision and supporting the ongoing improvement of the quality of its programmes. External examiners are encouraged to comment on the curriculum and on the assessment process and should be consulted on changes to the curriculum and assessment arrangements. External examiner reports are shared with the staff and student body through the INTO Learning and Teaching Committee. The provider continues to use Annual Programme Reviews to assure the quality and maintenance of academic standards, and feedback from external examiners and students is considered as part of the process. As a result of these reviews in 2023-24, there is a focus on reducing the assessment burden for students and on the increased use of feedforward to better support students. Programme review outcomes are collated annually and presented at the Learning and Teaching Committee.

Background to the desk-based analysis

17 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/annual monitoring. 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.

18 The desk-based analysis was carried out by Lorraine Lavery, Reviewer, and Monika Ruthe, QAA Officer, in April 2024. 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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