



The Washington International Studies Council

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

May 2016

How effectively does The Washington International Studies Council use external scrutiny of assessment processes to assure academic standards (where applicable)?

1.6 Students submit a weekly essay for discussion and marking. Towards the end of each term, tutors are asked to submit a written report on their student's work and progress, and to provide an assessment. Grades are discussed with a WISC academic adviser, but are not subject to negotiation or appeal. The home institution receives and reviews the transcript and normally reviews the grades and report. In exceptional cases, additional assessed work may be required as a precondition for the award of credit.

1.7 WISC provides transcripts for associate students; the colleges provide transcripts for visiting students. Transcripts consist of a cover letter signed by the tutor, a grade report with course titles, tutor's names and grades, a grade conversion scale which sets out performance benchmarks as determined by the tutor, and individual tutorial reports.

The panel has concluded that The Washington International Studies Council **satisfactorily manages** its responsibilities for academic standards in accordance with the requirements of its awarding partners.

2 Quality of learning opportunities

How effectively does The Washington International Studies Council fulfil its responsibilities for managing the quality of learning opportunities?

2.1 Visiting students are taught by their college, which also makes appropriate tutorial arrangements. For associate students, WISC organises teaching arrangements in consultation with the Senior Tutor of New College, using only tutors employed by the University of Oxford and often holding college fellowships. WISC has reviewed its contractual arrangements since its previous QAA review in 2012, creating a formal letter of agreement specifying the duties of the tutor (which include reporting students who miss a tutorial or are not making satisfactory progress) and providing information about the prospective student's academic background and interest in the subject. In the light of this

2.4 The panel concluded that WISC liaises closely with colleges and tutors to provide excellent learning opportunities for students and that it is effectively managing its responsibilities for the quality of learning opportunities.

How effectively are external reference points used in monitoring and evaluation?

2.5 While WISC is cognisant of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, its external reference points are the requirements of the home institutions as set out in consortium agreements.

How effectively does The Washington International Studies Council assure itself that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

2.6 WISC obtains formal student feedback through end-of-term evaluations; the President summarises each term's student evaluation reports and circulates this information to staff. WISC has recently devised an evaluation of the orientation programme to determine which lectures and events are most effective in helping students to adjust during their first two weeks in Oxford. Student feedback is also gathered through contact between tutors

positively about their experience as a whole and of the arrangements made by WISC, and confirmed that they were clear as to what was expected of them.

2.11 Under WISC's attendance policy, credits are recommended on the basis of the number of tutorials attended and essays submitted, and WISC's Academic Office maintains contact with every tutor, both informally and on the basis of teaching agreements

science students have undertaken the laboratory components of their programme at their home institution; in other cases, WISC has made ad hoc arrangements for laboratory use; in other cases again, students have withdrawn their application. Overall, WISC has responded effectively and professionally to a situation that affects only a small number of students.

The panel has **confidence** that The Washington International Studies Council is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the learning opr3.71 59.88 re W*B1

4 Action plan³

The Washington International Studies Council: action plan relating to the Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight in May 2016						
Good practice	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The review panel identified the following areas of good practice that are worthy of wider dissemination within WISC:						
Close liaison with relevant colleges of the University of Oxford facilitates the institution's coherent and holistic response to student support and feedback.	Greater student integration into the social and academic life of the Oxford college with which they are affiliated.	Review contract language with college liaisons representatives with a view to increasing the termly stipend and requiring a more proactive approach to facilitating student integration, especially in the first two weeks of the term.	27 September 2016 (contract review completed) and 10 January 2017 (evaluation summary of Michaelmas term feedback).	Tim Moore, Adam Brown.	Robert Schuettinger and members of the Academic Board.	Student feedback as recorded in the end-of-term evaluation forms.

³ The Washington International Studies Council has been required to develop this action plan to follow up on good practice and address any recommendations arising from the review. QAA monitors progress against the action plan.

Advisable	Intended outcomes	Actions to be taken to achieve intended outcomes	Target date(s)	Action by	Reported to	Evaluation (process or evidence)
The panel considers that it is advisable for WISC to: Introduce a formal procedure to ensure that all contractual agreements with partner institutions are both current and subject to regular review.	To maintain a comprehensive record of current contracts/ consortium agreements between WISC and 'regular' partner universities/colleges that is subject to regular reviews by WISC and the affiliated universities/ colleges.	Revise and update				

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 Q BT 1y96 4 ET q Q 7 BT 1 0 0nd Q BT 1Tucation