



Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight: report of the monitoring visit of GIHE UK Limited, June 2024

Outcome of the monitoring visit

1 From the evidence provided in the annual return and at the monitoring visit, the review team concludes that GIHE UK Limited (GIHE) is making acceptable progress with continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision since the [June 2023 Higher Education Review \(Foreign Providers\)](#).

Changes since the last QAA review

2 Student numbers for September 2023 indicate a total of 206 students - 123 undergraduate and 83 postgraduate - of whom 135 are currently studying at the London campus, with others registered at the London campus but either on placement or studying the first semesters at one of the Swiss campuses. There are 29 team members directly employed at the London campus, which includes 13 full-time, one part-time and 14 visiting lecturers and consultants for London, which can increase at times subject to student numbers. 14 Switzerland-based personnel provide administration, marketing and internships support. However, programmes have good student/staff ratio on both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, which was confirmed by students. A small team is working very closely with students who expressed high satisfaction with the continuous support they receive on various academic and professional matters. There was no significant staff turnover last year; only one faculty staff member changed in the current academic year.

3 Since the submission of the Annual Monitoring Return in April 2024, the Campus Director who was also the Facilitator has moved to another part of the organisation and been replaced in both roles by a member of staff from the London campus. QAA was not advised of this. Since the full review in June 2023, a new Student Affairs Manager has been appointed.

4 There were no other external reviews or examinations since the Higher Education Review (Foreign Providers) (HER (FP)) in June 2023.

Findings from the monitoring visit

5 Programmes are all validated by the parent organisation - Glion International, based in Switzerland. The processes for managing responsibilities for academic standards at the GIHE London campus are still established by the parent institution. Policies and processes continue to be common to all centres. Oversight of academic standards is carried out by the senior management of Glion with regular communication and collaboration between academic staff in London and Switzerland. GIHE has changed the title of one postgraduate programme, but otherwise the programme remains the same. A New Governance Policy is being introduced to improve alignment between Switzerland and UK provision and

better-defined student roles. GIHE continues with areas identified as good practice in the full review of June 2023. This involves supporting international students who have a delayed start, including recording of lectures for the first four weeks, and preparing students for the real world, providing practical work experience in placements and internships, and learning opportunities with Switzerland. They also continue to provide comprehensive feedback on assessment and students expressed a high level of satisfaction with support they receive as well as placement opportunities and expertise of teaching staff.

6 The review team has seen evidence that the latest Academic Board had a student representative present and engaged in the discussions; however, relevant government policy and procedures have not yet been approved to formally confirm the new structure. The outcome was reached by the team examining the annual monitoring document, supporting evidence and additional evidence requested by the team. Meetings were held online with students, senior staff, and academic and support staff. The team particularly examined progress made against the three recommendations and the affirmation identified in the HER (FP) report conducted in June 2023. The review team considered the Annual Monitoring Form which contained an outline of the developments since the HER (FP) in June 2023. This included an action plan that contained a number of wider institutional actions, including those developed in response to the HER (FP); however, a specific action plan produced to show evidence of actions considered and taken in direct response to the recommendations of the 2023 review, was not produced or posted on the GIHE website as required by the review process. From the evidence provided, the conclusions are that GIHE is making progress with continuing to maintain, review and enhance its higher education provision.

7 The review team reported on progress with three recommendations from the previous full report of June 2023. The first recommendation was to 'reintroduce a more systematic approach to teaching observations', which GIHE has completed. The second was to 'review the role of students in academic governance of the Institute and include them in the quality cycle'. The third recommendation was to 'review the complaints procedure in order to differentiate between appeals relating to mitigating circumstances and complaints; provide guidance on where a student can obtain impartial advice on how to make a complaint and include an external reference point for the escalation of complaints which are not resolved by the Institute's internal complaints committee. The review team concluded that the established action plan was not fully effective in addressing the second and third recommendations. In May 2024, just before the review visit, GIHE still had the QAA-specific action plan related to the 2019 visit on their website. When reminded about the publication of the action plan related to 2023 recommendations, GIHE has updated the website which included a wider institutional action plan with QAA-related actions highlighted. All recommendations were due to be addressed by September 2023.

8 With reference to the first recommendation, the review team confirm that a more systematic approach to teaching observations was reintroduced since the full review in June 2023. A new peer review form and system was introduced, an external consultant has been appointed to hold a development session with staff, and a number of peer observations has taken place since the last full review. The review team examined the new form which has a clear set of next actions included. Academic staff confirmed that they were observed or conducted peer observations, and that it helped them to share good practice in teaching, interaction with students and have had constructive discussions with other peer reviewers that helped inform their practice and lead to development. Senior management confirmed that the teaching observations were organised so that they avoid any disruption to students - who also stated that the teaching observations took place at appropriate time and that it was made clear to them that this is for staff development purposes. The last set of Academic Board minutes demonstrated that the impact of these observations has been discussed.

9 Actions which relate to the second recommendation continue. The review team confirms that the documentation submitted and reviewed did not include revised governance policy that was displayed at the meeting with senior management and academic staff, which included revised structure and student representation at the Academic Board. All policies and procedures are common to GIHE campuses and formal approval must be agreed by the governing body in Switzerland. The presented draft was not yet formally approved; however, minutes of the most recent Academic Board that was held just a few days before the visit were seen by the review team and they clearly demonstrated student representative attendance and engagement with discussion. GIHE has started to engage with this recommendation but has not fully completed and approved relevant processes and policies or revised Terms of Reference of the Academic Board, and no reasons were given for this. Students were aware of the process for election of student class representative and their role. They confirmed that class representatives have a monthly call with senior management and professional staff where they can raise any ongoing issues, with campus director, programme coordinator, registry, career services and staff responsible for resources. Students were able to give feedback about the course and suggestions for improvement. Students were also aware of student representation at undergraduate Academic Student Council and Programme Committee Meetings and have mentioned that they hear from the Campus Director informally at Annual Programme Meetings organised from Switzerland but were unsure of any direct governance involvement or student representation at governance level.

10 With reference to the third recommendation, the review team confirms that the documentation submitted and reviewed did not include a revised complaints procedure or differentiate clearly between appeals relating to mitigating circumstances and complaints. No guidance was provided as to where a student can obtain impartial advice on how to make a complaint and the documentation did not include an external reference point for the escalation of complaints which are not resolved by the GIHE internal complaints committee - and no explanation was provided for this. Students met by the team were not aware what external bodies, such as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, exist to escalate any potential complaints and were not aware where they can get impartial advice on how to make a complaint. They were aware that particular institutional policies refer to the complaints procedure and confirmed that the faculty and senior staff are approachable if they require any support and clarification, as they have an open-door policy, and that their concerns or submission-related complaints were addressed quickly. Senior management confirmed that academic rules and regulations outline the complaints procedure and that the student code of conduct outlines professional expectations, but have acknowledged that the Institute is still behind with this action as the policy is currently under review, and is due to be completed and approved by December 2024, with a new policy to be introduced from 2025.

Student data return

11 Performance data indicates that retention and progression levels remain high since the last full review. At undergraduate level across all campuses, the Institute records 89% cumulative retention for Year 1 students and 90% for Year 2 for fall intake of 2022. At postgraduate level, there is around 95% cumulative retention since 2018 across all campuses (London and Switzerland). Fall 2022 intake of MSc in Real Estate, Finance and Hotel Development (REFHD) programme retained 100% of students. Since September 2023, student numbers have decreased - undergraduate programme had 105 active students in April 2024 compared to 123 students in September 2023. MSc in International Hospitality Business had 27 students in April 2024 compared to 27 in September 2023; and MSc in Real Estate, Finance and Hotel Development had 45 students in September 2023 compared to 26 in April 2024.

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

12 The documentation provided by GIHE does reference the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code). They demonstrated provision and curriculum design mapping against the Quality Code. The HER (FP) review team in June 2023 affirmed the actions already being taken to make academic standards secure and improve the educational provision offered to students as 'Continue the process of aligning provision to the relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Statement'; however, the documentation provided by GIHE did not reference the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement. Senior staff confirmed that the Institute did not yet map the provision to the Subject Benchmark Statements. The main external reference point for GIHE continues to be the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) Standards for Accreditation and Swiss National Standards for Higher Education institutions, which incorporate the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

Background to the monitoring visit

13 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.

14 The monitoring visit was carried out by Jovana Perzic, Reviewer, and Millard Parkinson, QAA Officer, on 12 June 2024.

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Southgate House, Southgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1UB
Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

Tel: 01452 557000
Web: www.qaa.ac.uk