



# International Quality Review Mid-Cycle Quality Review of International Business Faculty, Beijing Normal University, Zhuhai

November 2022

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## About this mid-cycle review

This is a report of a Mid-Cycle Quality Review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the International Business Faculty of Beijing Normal University, Zhuhai. The mid-cycle review is desk-based and was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

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- Dr Yue Song.

The International Quality Review (IQR) in November 2019, resulted in a [published report](#). The QAA review team concluded that the institution met all 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#). The team identified three features of good practice and made four recommendations.

This mid-cycle review evaluates progress against the key actions since the IQR and considers any significant changes that may impact on the ability of the International Business Faculty of Beijing Normal University, Zhuhai to continue to meet the ESG standards.

## Outcome of the mid-cycle review

1 From the evidence provided the review team concludes that the International Business Faculty of Beijing Normal University, Zhuhai (IBF) is making satisfactory progress since the November 2019 International Quality Review and that the period of validity of the IQR should be extended to IBF's provision termination date or March 2025, whichever comes early.

## Summary of IQR outcomes

### Overview of the institution

2 Beijing Normal University, Zhuhai (BNUZ) is a full-time, ordinary university approved by the Ministry of Education (MOE) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and co-sponsored by Beijing Normal University and the Zhuhai Municipal People's Government for undergraduate education.

3 According to the regulations of the MOE, Beijing Normal University is responsible for the teaching, organisation and management of BNUZ. Beijing Normal University has oversight of the quality and level of its education; in doing so it dispatches experienced management teams to take charge of the administration and teaching management of BNUZ. Since its establishment, students have come from 27 provinces (autonomous regions and province-level municipalities) as well as Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. There are approximately 23,000 current students studying at BNUZ; and it has 14 schools (faculties) including the International Business Faculty (IBF). Together, the schools deliver 61 undergraduate majors in eight disciplines.

4 The subject of this review is the International Business Faculty (IBF) which was founded in July 2009 and is the offspring of the former International Finance College, Business School and International Faculty. It has four departments: Finance; International Economics and Trade; Accounting; and Business Administration.

5 IBF has the largest number of students at BNUZ. At present, there are more than 700 students at IBF. IBF has a number of principles underpinning its educational activity. These include the school-wide idea of 'people-oriented, pursuing excellence' and the

educational idea of 'pursuing studies, cultivating morality while benefiting the world'. IBF is dedicated to internationalised education through actively expanding international high-quality educational resources. It is committed to cultivating high-quality applied talents with excellent humanities and science literacy, solid professional foundation and strong practical ability through application-oriented education. IBF pursues the value of 'responsibility, inclusion, ambition and innovation'. It is committed to fostering virtue through education and to promoting an ethical business culture. It seeks to become a national, well-known and regional leading business school.

## **Good practice identified by the 2019 International Quality Review**

- 6 The QAA review team identified the following features of good practice at IBF.
- The provision of dedicated staff and telephone lines to provide support to students and their parents concerning issues relating to the transition from high school to university (ESG Standard 1.4).
  - The Muduo • Lishang programme which provides a platform for students to deepen their knowledge, develop research skills and work collaboratively (ESG Standard 1.6).
  - The comprehensive support provided to students throughout their student journey that ensures timely intervention where required (ESG Standard 1.6).

## **Recommendations of the 2019 International Quality Review**

- 7 The QAA review team made the following recommendations to IBF.
- Undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the recently introduced committee to ensure it is meeting intended objectives (ESG Standard 1.1).
  - Adopt a more detailed and explicit approach to recording the business of meetings that explicitly conveys the decision-making process and actions agreed (ESG Standard 1.2).
  - Implement an approach to capturing and disseminating the experiences and good practice of students who are working in a student support capacity (ESG Standard 1.6).
  - Put in place a systematic evaluation of the services provided by students working in a student support capacity (ESG Standard 1.6).

## **Changes since the last IQR review visit**

8 In April 2019, the Ministry of Education officially approved the construction of Zhuhai Campus of Beijing Normal University, which will run schools at the same level and standards as the Beijing campus of Beijing Normal University. Accordingly, BNUZ reduced its student recruitment plan year-by-year after its final enrolment in 2020 and will be terminated in 2024.

9 Before the termination of current provision in 2024, BNUZ continues to increase the input of educational resources to ensure that the quality of student training is not degraded. In this transformation period, IBF continues to adhere to the development idea of 'connotation development and characteristic development', and strives to cultivate application-oriented talents in economics and management with excellent humanities and science literacy, solid professional foundation and strong practical ability.

10 Several significant strategic developments have taken place to achieve the above educational concept and aims:

11 **IBF development project:** IBF launched 20 developmental projects on the operational level in 2020, focusing on the development of curriculum, teaching quality, training for teaching and professional support staff, student mental health, student employability and so on. IBF conducted research, focus groups, training, evaluations and developed review reports and associated action plans, which supported further development and transformation of Zhuhai campus.

12 **Carry out individualised academic guidance:** To ensure students can achieve intended learning outcomes as scheduled, IBF has formulated the Interim Measures for Individual Academic Guidance of IBF. IBF has scheduled courses for each programme in the next two semesters, and provided detailed plans for students to retake and make up according to the scheduled implementation of the teaching plan.

13 **Improve the teaching quality:** For example, since 2019, IBF has successively established two teaching staff groups for curriculum cultivation and reviews, covering 20 courses in total. The curriculum cultivation and review provided effective group support for the development of teaching. Another example to improve the teaching quality is that, from April to June 2022, a total of 22 teachers from IBF academic departments conducted a 30-minute teaching demonstration on 22 courses which was observed by peers and fed back to improve curriculum development and teaching quality.

14 **Research development:** To develop IBF's research capacity, IBF carried out training and external expert reviews for research teams to support their application of scientific projects at the provincial and ministerial level and above. In addition, IBF has created an internal publication - Business Education Research - to record IBF's research of business education on both practical and theoretical levels.

15 **Case library development:** Through the joint efforts of IBF and external employers, since December 2019, IBF has established a case library which includes business case studies mainly from enterprises and institutions in Greater Bay Area. So far, 21 case studies have been developed and most of them have embedded into teaching and research.

## Findings from the mid-cycle review analysis

16 Following the IQR in 2019, BNUZ prepared an action plan to address the recommendations and to take forward the identified areas of good practice. The mid-cycle review is a desk-based process and the team considered documentary evidence alongside the institutional Mid-Cycle Review report. The review team has been able to conclude from this analysis that IBF is further developing its three good practices and making progress in response to the four recommendations, such that each has been addressed with effective oversight.

17 The IQR report identified three features of good practice and the mid-cycle review team noted evidence of progress as follows.

**Good practice 1:** The provision of dedicated staff and telephone lines to provide support to students and their parents concerning issues relating to the transition from high school to university (ESG Standard 1.4).

18 The IQR institutional action plan committed IBF not only to maintain but also to extend the telephone consultancy services to students and parents at all stages of the student journey. IBF strengthened close contact and support for students and parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers were assigned to regularly contact students and parents through phone calls and WeChat messaging, checking how students and parents coped with

online learning and offering guidance on how to use online learning resources, and how parents could effectively support students. A feedback form was sent to parents to collect details of students' personal situations when studying at home. Counselling services were provided to those in need of psychological support and IBF kept tracked record to ensure each student case has been followed up appropriately. As seen from WeChat screenshots, both students and parents provided positive feedback on the telephone and messaging consultancy services they received from IBF.

**Good practice 2:** The Muduo • Lishang programme which provides a platform for students to deepen their knowledge, develop research skills and work collaboratively (ESG Standard 1.6).

19 IBF has continued the Muduo • Lishang programme in line with its commitment in the IQR action plan. Over the period, many teams have taken part in the Education Programme, with modules including academic competition, academic research, essay writing and classical academic reading. Since the IQR review, IBF has organised six academic forums, 14 academic salons and several guest lectures, making sure students have various opportunities to learn from experts and develop their research skills.

20 In addition, IBF has further developed the 'Muduo • Lishang' Freshmen Mentoring and Education Programme. So far, the programme has been organised for five terms, in which 428 students from 90 student teams have developed research under the guidance of instructors and achieved fruitful results in the four modules including academic competition, academic research, essay writing and classical academic reading. The evidence base includes synopses of the activities undertaken although evidence evaluation of the recent effectiveness of the programme is not apparent, but the good impact of the Muduo • Lishang was noted by the IQR review team. For example, IBF students participated in various academic competitions at all levels and achieved various academic awards each year.

21 To further improve students' academic development, IBF has launched 'Beijing Campus Exchange Programme'. It has been carried out for six terms with a total of 159 students exchanged to the Beijing Normal University - Beijing Campus. According to student feedback, this programme has developed their academic and research skills, broadened their horizons and enriched their learning experiences. Among the students who have participated in the exchange programme, five have been admitted as postgraduate students in well-known domestic universities such as Beijing Normal University and Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, and 26 have been admitted to overseas universities such as University of Sydney and Durham University.

**Good practice 3:** The comprehensive support provided to students throughout their student journey, that ensures timely intervention where required (ESG Standard 1.6).

22 IBF has developed clear guidelines to enable systematic recording and reporting on the outcomes of pastoral support activities across the dormitories and psychological support. Each student has a profile to record their personal information. Student profiles are monitored and updated on an ongoing basis. Counselling services were provided for students who needed extra pastoral care. The delivery of counselling services was clearly recorded as part of the student profile.

23 IBF also involves parents in students' pastoral care. The process starts with the collection of written feedback from parents on the personal situation of each student after enrolment. Parents are contacted regularly by the teacher through phone calls or WeChat messages to check on student status and provide guidelines on student safety and mental health. For students who need to live independently because they do not adapt to collective life, IBF communicates with their families in time to explain the possible risks and problems of off-campus housing, to ensure the safety of students living alone off-campus.

24 IBF has taken action in response to four recommendations arising from IQR:

**Recommendation 1:** Undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of the recently introduced committee structure to ensure it is meeting intended objectives (ESG Standard 1.1).

25 The main IBF committees include the Teaching Quality Assurance Committee, the Teaching Guidance Committee and the Academic Committee. IBF follows the BNUZ's annual review process - at the end of the academic year, the Chair of the committee reports on activities during the academic year feeding into the IBF's teaching and research annual summary. The Director of IBF reports this annual summary to BNUZ which will be rated by the University senior management team as part of the University's annual review. Any areas for development will then be considered in the next academic year's IBF work plan.

26 In addition, how each member of the committees conducts their roles in line with Terms of Reference of the Committees is checked in the staff annual performance review. At the end of the academic year, most members of the Teaching Quality Assurance Committee and the Teaching Guidance Committee - who are the provosts and department heads; and most members of the Academic Committee - who are the heads of scientific research and professors, need to submit a self-evaluation report which includes clarifications on how they conduct their committee roles appropriately. All staff self-evaluation reports are reviewed by all IBF faculty members who provide rating and feedback on their performance. The ratings on staff performance feeds into the staff appraisal programme. Staff with lower performance ratings will have a one-to-one meeting with the Director of IBF to produce an individual developmental plan.

**Recommendation 2:** Adopt a more detailed and explicit approach to recording the business of meetings that explicitly conveys the decision-making process and actions agreed (ESG Standard 1.2).

27 IBF developed Terms of Reference for all of its committees in 2019. These committee Terms of Reference clearly define their roles and responsibilities, and operational arrangements. Each committee has one formal meeting each semester to conduct its roles and responsibilities.

28 Since 2019, IBF has developed and used a standardised template for the recording of the minutes of the committee meetings. A sample of committee meeting minutes was provided by IBF and demonstrates the consistency of committee minutes.

29 IBF reported in its submission that IBF is following the BNUZ's standardised procedure for making decisions and taking actions. For example, to decide which quality engineering projects should be recommended to the Government, the secretary of the Teaching Guidance Committee released the notice to the School on the recommendation of provincial quality engineering projects in 2022. The Teaching Guidance Committee then reviewed the project applications submitted by the applicants and voted based on the Government's project selection criteria. Based on the vote, the secretary of the committee submitted the committee's recommendations to the academic affairs office of BNUZ to seek the approval at the institutional level before the applications were sent to the Government.

30 Decisions made by the committees are communicated to all IBF teachers in a clear and timely manner. The review team considered the 2022 curriculum ideological and political teaching competition as an example. The programme leaders drafted a plan for the competition, which was published on the IBF website after the approval by the Teaching Guidance Committee. The Teaching Guidance Committee set the scope of the competition and provided recommendations on the operational arrangements. The committee meeting

minutes were shared with all programme leaders and faculty members, and the key points of the committee recommendations were reflected in the published competition plan.

**Recommendation 3:** Implement an approach to capturing and disseminating the experiences and good practice of students who are working in a student support capacity (ESG Standard 1.6).

31 IBF has continued to use peer mentors as a significant source of student support, acting as '...links and bridges between students and teachers, the builders and participants of campus cultural activities, and the practitioners of 'self-education, self-management, self-services and self-restraint' efforts. IBF recruited peer mentors in 2020; no more peer mentors have been recruited since 2021 due to the closure of new student recruitment in the Beijing Normal Zhuhai branch.

32 In response to the recommendation, IBF reported in the IQR Action Plan a commitment to create channels to share experiences and good practice among peer tutors, including work summaries, and also to share good practice more widely through various media. There is systematic recording of how peer mentors support students, including observing students' class performance and one-to-one meetings with students. These records feed into the peer mentors' annual performance review. Each peer mentor summarises what they have done each year and submits a self-evaluation document which will be rated and provided with feedback from students and staff. The experiences and good practices of peer mentors are developed as case studies and shared with staff and students. The work and experiences of outstanding peer mentors has been publicised on the university website to encourage good practice.

**Recommendation 4:** Put in place a systematic evaluation of the services provided by students working in a student support capacity (ESG Standard 1.6).

33 The IQR report noted the usefulness of roles carried out by students in support of other students. The IQR report observed that there was scope for greater clarity on how the student support roles were evaluated to ensure effectiveness.

34 In response to the recommendation, IBF reported that the peer mentoring programme included a recruitment management and promotion plan, the recording of work activities and outcomes, and systems for self-reflection and feedback from students and teachers. Evidence or synopsis of evidence has been provided, including: the selection process; peer mentoring registration forms; forms to record interactions between mentors and their mentees; minutes of meetings of mentors; records of meetings between mentors and students; appraisal and assessment forms; and work summaries.

35 IBF has formulated clear guidance to evaluate peer mentors, including ratings on peer mentors' work content, efficacy and effectiveness of work delivery. The evaluation should be conducted following the principles of fairness, objectivity, democracy and openness, so all peer mentors publicly report their work to students in their classes, accept democratic ratings and comments from students, and complete peer mentor assessment forms. Teachers then make an objective and fair assessment of peer mentors based on their work performance and other student feedback, and complete the peer mentor evaluation forms.

## Development of quality assurance and enhancement procedures

36 IBF cited a series of initiatives to enhance what was found in the IQR process to be already robust quality assurance systems. At the end of each academic year, programmes and departments summarise and review their work and produce an annual report. Based on this annual report, the IBF Director develops a report which summarises learning, teaching and research activities. The Director's report will be presented to all IBF staff and the BNUZ's senior management team who will provide ratings and feedback for further development. The feedback from staff and the senior management team will feed into the next year's IBF work plan.

37 In addition, IBF launched a series of departmental development projects in 2020 to enable the enhancement of the quality of teaching and research.

38 The 'Brand, Quality, Taste - Benchmarking and Teaching Quality Improvement Action Plan', overseen by the quality assurance committee, provides an ongoing monitoring and evaluation procedure to improve learning and teaching quality. Both teaching staff and students prepare self-evaluation documents clarifying how they have achieved their work or study target each academic year. Students' self-evaluations are checked by teachers on a class basis. Any class issues identified will be reported to the programme leader as part of the annual programme review. The teaching staff's self-evaluations will be checked by Deans or department Heads and feed into performance review. The Teaching Quality Assurance Committee will review the summaries of class performance, appraise the classes with good practices of learning and teaching, and identify areas for development which feed into the next year's work plan.

39 Teaching inspections have been conducted at least once per term under the oversight of the BNUZ Office of Academic Affairs and the senior management team. The summary reports of teaching inspections were considered and acted upon by the teaching team in a timely manner. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, online teaching inspections were conducted, and both student and teacher feedback was collected through the survey or online forums. Based on the staff and student feedback, IBF has updated teaching plans and guidelines.

40 IBF took several actions to support teaching and learning following the outbreak of COVID-19. IBF followed the BNUZ *Action Plan for Online Teaching during the Epidemic Prevention and Control Period*, with its own implementation plan for the delivery and quality assurance of online teaching. A technical support team was created, with systems to enable the prompt reporting and resolution of problems. Teaching staff have had discussions on how to enhance online teaching and learning, with adjustments to teaching and assessment methods. There was a series of professional development sessions, including workshops and seminars, for teachers.

41 IBF has appointed an external advisory group which provides external advice on learning, teaching and research. Owing to the pandemic, IBF has not arranged a formal group meeting, but IBF reported that external advice was sought through calls or WeChat messages, with particular focus on how to support student learning during the pandemic.

42 To assure the quality of research development, IBF follows the University's research evaluation procedure. BNUZ has a clear requirement of how much research work should be done each academic year for different levels of staff including Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor and Researcher.



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