



Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd

Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

May 2012

Annex 10: University of Surrey International Study Centre

Introduction and background

The University of Surrey International Study Centre (SISC) was established in 2007. It delivers an International Foundation Year (Business, Economics, Law and Politics; Engineering, Science and Mathematics), a Pre-Masters (Economics), and an English Language Preparation Programme. Students who successfully complete the programmes and achieve the required progression grades will progress to an undergraduate or master's programme at the University.

The responsibilities of the respective parties are set out in the inter-institutional agreement. Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, through the ISC, is responsible for the academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, though the inter-institutional agreement is not explicit on this point, as it states that procedures must follow the University's quality assurance requirements. The International Foundation Year programme has been approved by the University, but does not lead to its award. The pre-master's programme is offered as an approved programme. The University is responsible for public information.

Key findings

Academic standards

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that there can be **limited confidence** that academic standards at the University of Surrey International Study Centre are managed appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (and of the University where appropriate).

Quality of learning opportunities

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that there can be **confidence** that the quality of learning opportunities at the University of Surrey International Study Centre is assured and enhanced appropriately and in accordance with the policies and procedures of Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd (and of the University where appropriate).

Public information

As a result of its investigations, the review team considers that **reliance can** be placed on the accuracy and completeness of the information that this ISC is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

Good practice

The review noted the following **feature of good practice** at this embedded college:

- use of the virtual learning environment to enhance programme delivery (paragraph 10).

Recommendations

The review team makes the following recommendation in relation to this college.

The review team considers that it is **essential** for SISC to:

- ensure that all programmes are specified in appropriate definitive documents before further students are admitted (paragraphs 2-3).

The review team considers that it is **advisable** for SISC to:

- review the use of the term 'credit' in connection with the International Foundation Year programme (paragraph 5).

The review team considers that it is **desirable** for SISC to:

- address the recommendations of the approval panel for the International Foundation Year programme in relation to staffing (paragraph 11).

Detailed findings

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and SISC fulfil responsibilities for the management of academic standards at this college?

1 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd does not in all respects fulfil its responsibilities for the management of academic standards at this ISC effectively. See main report, paragraphs 1.1 - 1.14.

2 The pre-master's programme in Economics recruited its first student in 2011. This programme was developed informally with input from the University of Surrey Economics Link Tutor and contacts at the University of Sussex where a similar programme is delivered. The University of Surrey has reviewed the module content of this programme and formally endorsed the offering of this programme, but at the time of the review the programme documentation was incomplete. The review team was provided with module specifications for the pre-master's, but the ISC was unable to provide a definitive programme specification or programme-specific regulations and policies related to this programme. The team was told that regulations for the pre-master's programme would be similar to those for the International Foundation Year, but these had not yet been finally agreed and there was ongoing discussion on assessment issues such as resits.

3 The review team concluded that these definitive and regulatory matters should have been addressed and secured before students were admitted to the programme. It is essential that Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd ensures that all programmes are specified in appropriate definitive documents before further students are admitted.

4 The review team also found that there had been no formal approval of the pre-master's programme. See main report, paragraph 1.11.

5 Neither the International Foundation Year nor the pre-master's programme lead to awards of the University and they do not offer academic credit. However, at the time of the review, module specifications contained explicit reference to academic credit. The review team concluded that these references have the potential to mislead students and other stakeholders about the status of the programmes offered at this ISC. Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd is advised to review the use of the term 'credit' in connection with the International Foundation Year programme.

How effective is the management of student assessment?

6 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd fulfils its responsibilities for managing the assessment of students at this ISC effectively. See main report, paragraphs 1.15 - 1.21.

How effectively are UK external reference points used in the management of academic standards?

7 UK external reference points are generally used effectively in the management of academic standards. See main report, paragraphs 1.22 - 1.26.

How effectively are external examining, moderation, or verification used to assure academic standards?

8 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd makes effective use of external examining, moderation, or verification to assure academic standards. See main report, paragraphs 1.27 - 1.33.

How effectively is statistical information used to monitor and assure academic standards?

9 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd makes effective use of statistical information to monitor and assure academic standards. See main report, paragraphs 1.34 - 1.39.

How effectively are responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities fulfilled?

10 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd fulfils its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities at this ISC effectively. See main report, paragraphs 2.1 - 2.4. At this ISC, the virtual learning environment (VLE) is used particularly effectively to enhance programme delivery. This effectiveness is supported by the provision of staff development for use of the VLE, and particularly the designation of a member of staff as a VLE Champion who is involved in the training and development of staff to improve the student experience, and had presented at the Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd Teachers' Conference on the use of the VLE to enhance learning and teaching. The review team identified the use of the VLE to enhance programme delivery as a feature of good practice.

11 At the time of the review, SISC relied on hourly paid staff to a greater extent than other ISCs with similar numbers of students. The review team found that the approval panel for the International Foundation Year programme had recommended consideration of 'a policy which aligns academic staffing numbers with student numbers and ensures greater continuity by increasing the number of staff on extended contracts (rather than hourly paid)'. The team also noted that such a policy had not yet been developed, but that this is currently being reviewed across the network of ISCs in order to provide greater clarity of guidance on staff-student ratios. Meanwhile, at this ISC, it is desirable that Bellerbys Educational

Services Ltd addresses the recommendations of the approval panel for the International Foundation Year programme in relation to staffing.

How effectively are external reference points used in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities?

12 Appropriate sections of the *Code of practice* are used effectively in the management and enhancement of learning opportunities. See main report, paragraphs 2.5 - 2.6.

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and SISC assure themselves that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained and enhanced?

13 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd assures itself effectively that the quality of teaching and learning is being maintained at this ISC. See main report, paragraphs 2.7 - 2.11.

How is student feedback used to assure and enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

14 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's expectations with regard to student feedback are met through the effective use of questionnaires and students' elected representatives. See main report, paragraphs 2.12 - 2.16.

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and SISC assure themselves that students are supported effectively?

15 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd fulfils its obligations for the support of students at the ISC effectively. See main report, paragraphs 2.17 - 2.21.

How effectively does SISC manage the recruitment and admission of students?

16 Recruitment and admission of students SISC are managed centrally by Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, and these processes are generally effective. See main report, paragraphs 2.22 - 2.26.

What are the arrangements for staff development to maintain and/or enhance the quality of learning opportunities?

17 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's arrangements for staff development are applied effectively at this ISC. See main report, paragraphs 2.27 - 2.32.

How effectively do Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd and SISC ensure that learning resources are accessible to students and sufficient to enable them to achieve the learning outcomes?

18 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd, through its agreement with the University, manages the provision of learning resources effectively. See main report, paragraphs 2.33 - 2.37.

How effectively does Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's public information communicate to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides at this college?

19 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's public information communicates effectively to students and other stakeholders about the higher education it provides at this ISC. See main report, paragraphs 3.1 - 3.3.

How effective are the Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd's arrangements for assuring the accuracy and completeness of information it has responsibility for publishing at this college?

20 Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd works effectively with the University to provide accurate information about its higher education provision at this ISC. See main report, paragraphs 3.4 - 3.7.

Action plan

University of Surrey International Study Centre action plan relating to the Embedded College Review for Educational Oversight May 2012						
Good practice	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team identified the following area of good practice that is worthy of wider dissemination within the provider:						
9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of the virtual learning environment to enhance programme delivery (paragraph 10). 	Continue to develop individual course module sites and share ideas with centres through other virtual learning environments, ISC Teaching and Learning Committee and heads of centre	January 2013	SISC VLE Coordinator; module teaching staff; Head of Centre VLE Champion; module teaching staff; Head of Centre	Increased use by students as shown in usage statistics; increased sharing of information and communication in SISC and cross-ISCs; as seen in positive student feedback and notes of staff meetings	ISC Teaching and Learning Committee, ISCQAEC, Board of Studies; University of Surrey-Study Group Liaison Committee	The virtual learning environment pages at SISC Board of Studies review
	Engage in the transition to Moodle 2 and ensure staff participation	September to December 2012	VLE Champion; SISC Administrator; Head of Centre	All SISC students using Moodle 2 Transfer of all teaching materials	ISC Teaching and Learning Committee	Board of Studies review

	Redesign the virtual learning environment administration pages for greater student access and wider range of information	October 2012		and discussions to Moodle 2 Greater student use of pages as seen in 'before and after' user statistics and student feedback	Head of Centre	Board of Studies The virtual learning environment page at SISC
Essential	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team considers it essential for the provider to:						
7 • ensure that all programmes are specified in appropriate definitive documents before further students are admitted (paragraphs 2-3).	Suspend recruitment to Pre-Master's in Economics Remove references to Pre-Master's in Economics in promotional material	July 2012	Head of Centre, International Marketing Manager SISC, Head of International Marketing ISCs, University of Surrey Marketing and Communication Department	Inform BES agents that entry to Pre-Master's in Economics is closed Remove references to Pre-Master's Economics at SISC from BES promotional materials, websites and University of Surrey promotional materials and	Vice-President and Registrar, University Secretary and Legal Counsel, BES Sales and Marketing Director, University of Surrey-BES Liaison Committee, autumn 2012	Head of International Marketing ISCs letter to all partners to inform that admissions to Pre-Master's in Economics halted Confirmation that all promotional material is removed by the Head of International Marketing ISCs, and Senior Assistant

	Pre-Master's in Economics to be formally approved by BES as a programme	August 2012	Head of Centre, Deputy Principal ISCs, Academic Coordinator ISCs	websites BES to approve a definitive Centre Handbook, programme specification and Student Handbook	University of Surrey-BES Liaison Committee, autumn 2012; Vice-President and Registrar; Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)	Registrar (Quality Support) Pre-Master's in Economics definitive Programme Handbook, programme specifications and Centre Handbook Approval documentation, including sign-off
	Develop formal agreement for Pre-Master's in Economics between BES and University of Surrey	July 2012	University Secretary and Legal Counsel; Principal, ISCs; BES Managing Director	Discuss, agree and sign contractual agreement between the University of Surrey and BES	University Secretary and Legal Counsel; Vice-President and Registrar; ISCQAEC	Formal agreement for the Pre-Master's in Economics signed by BES and University of Surrey
	Submit approved Centre Handbook, programme specification and Student Handbook for Pre-Master's Economics to the University of Surrey for review	September 2012	Head of Centre, Deputy Principal, Academic Coordinator ISCs	Submission and review by the University of Surrey Academic Registry of the Centre Handbook, programme specifications and Student	University Secretary and Legal Counsel; Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Support); University of Surrey-BES Liaison	Confirmation of review by the University of Surrey of the Pre-Master's Centre Handbook, programme specifications and Student

				Handbook for Pre-Master's Economics	Committee, autumn 2012 meeting	Handbook
Advisable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team considers it advisable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review the use of the term 'credit' in connection with the International Foundation Year programme (paragraph 5). 	<p>The University of Surrey and BES conduct review of current International Foundation Year programme specifications and Centre Handbook and make recommendations with respect to removal of references to 'credit'</p> <p>Develop revised formal agreement for the International Foundation Year between the University of Surrey and BES</p>	<p>July 2012</p> <p>July 2012</p>	<p>The University of Surrey Quality Support Section, Head of Centre</p> <p>University Secretary and Legal Counsel; Principal ISCs; BES Managing Director</p>	<p>References to credit satisfactorily removed in validation proposal for submission to the University of Surrey</p> <p>Discuss, agree and sign contractual agreement between the University of Surrey and BES</p>	<p>Vice-President and Registrar; Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs); Deputy Principal ISCs</p> <p>University Secretary and Legal Counsel; Vice-President and Registrar; University of Surrey-BES Liaison Committee</p>	<p>Confirmation that the review of International Foundation Year programme documentation is undertaken from Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Support)</p> <p>Formal agreement for the International Foundation Year programme signed by BES and the University of Surrey</p>

	BES to submit programme proposal for non-credit-bearing International Foundation Year programme for validation to the University of Surrey	Documents to be submitted by 16 August 2012	Head of Centre, SISC module tutors, SISC Administrator The University of Surrey Quality Support Section, Pro-Vice-Chancellor	Validation event organised and held Report of validation event completed and submitted to University of Surrey and BES	Chair of the University of Surrey Learning and Teaching Committee	Documents submitted to the University of Surrey
	The University of Surrey validation event held	24 August 2012	The University of Surrey Quality Support Section; Head of Centre, SISC; SISC module tutors; SISC Administrator	Validation event held Report signed off by the University of Surrey Quality and Standards Sub-committee	University Vice-President and Registrar; Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs); Deputy President	Key findings letter; full report
Desirable	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation
The review team considers it desirable for the provider to:						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> address the recommendation of the approval panel for the International Foundation Year programme in relation to staffing 	BES submits Staffing Policy as part of the University validation	16 August 2012	Head of Centre	Validation event held Confirmation of BES's intention to commit to policy from Principal	ISCQAEC; University Vice-President and Registrar; Vice-President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor	Key findings letter; full report

(paragraph 11).				ISCs UK and Europe	(Academic Affairs)	
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Key to Action Plan:

BES: Bellerbys Educational Services Ltd

ISCQAEC: International Study Centres Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

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