



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

INSTITUTION: Foundation for International Education

ADDRESS: Foundation House
114 Cromwell Road
London
SW7 4ES

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Hania Al Muhaisen Rahman, Chair of the Board of Directors

Accreditation status: Accredited

Date of inspection: 4 February 2014

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION ON ACCREDITATION: Continued accreditation 13 March 2014

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

The Foundation for International Education (FIE) was established in early 1998 with 50 students from two American universities and with two staff. The FIE mission statement states that it aims 'to provide a high quality educational experience to the global community by the creation of an appropriate learning environment where students can understand and appreciate the privileges and responsibilities of international citizenship'. It achieves this by providing American universities and colleges with study-abroad programmes in London, Dublin and Amman, Jordan. Some of the programmes are 'closed' and tailor-made to a specific university's requirements. Others are open. All are credit-bearing, with the credits contributing to the students' final degrees. The credits are either awarded by the students' home institutions or by FIE through an arrangement with Drexel University and St Norbert College (both in the USA) known as a School of Record. Most programmes include internships for part of the students' stay.

FIE is a limited non-profit organisation. Its headquarters is in London, with a programme development team in the USA and a small student support team in Dublin. The President's position was noted as vacant at the 2012 inspection and remains so. The managerial structure, headed by the Chair of the Board of Directors, includes the Vice-President for Operations, a Chief Finance Officer, and a Director of Administrative and Academic Services. There are also senior and middle managers responsible for such matters as facilities, academic development, experiential learning (internships) and student life.

FIE's year is divided into Spring and Fall semesters and a range of summer school programmes which last between four and 10 weeks. In 2012, according to Annual Summary, FIE delivered 85 programmes in partnership with 51 universities/colleges. Current partner institutions include about 50 universities and colleges in the USA and also universities in the UK and Ireland. A total of 1,343 students attended, a small increase on 2011.

The student body consists mostly of US citizens, but plans to extend the programmes to students from, in particular, China, Japan and Taiwan. FIE's largest clients include North-Eastern, Drexel, Santa Clara and St John's Universities. Most students are recruited from liberal arts schools, but there are also a small number from other disciplines.

FIE has grown considerably since it was established, as have the number of partner universities and programmes, student participants, full-time administrative staff, teaching staff, ancillary staff and the number of dedicated student residences. It continues to upgrade and improve its teaching and learning environment and its student residences.

2. Brief description of the current provision

In the week of this interim inspection there were 320 students enrolled on a range of programmes in the Spring Semester running from January to mid-April. The students were from over 20 American universities or colleges. All the programmes were credit-bearing, contributing towards the students' undergraduate degrees. The current provision includes a very wide range of courses, as selected by the American partner institutions, on British, European and global themes including arts, business, and political, social and environmental studies. There are both open and closed courses. Most are taught by lecturers recruited locally by FIE but some by visiting faculty lecturers from the American partners. About 60% of all programmes include an internship component to allow students to develop their understanding of the UK workplace. For these the students require a Tier 4 visa.

FIE has grown steadily since the last inspection. The academic year 2012/13 had the highest student enrolment in the organisation's history and numbers in 2013/14 are set to exceed that figure. Almost all students continue

to come from the USA, but in the spring of 2013 the first group attended from a university in Japan and it is hoped to expand that provision. About 70% of students on the current spring semester are female and almost all are accommodated in FIE's own residences, which are all located close to the college in Kensington. Most lessons are timetabled in the Foundation building but, especially in summer, additional classroom and lecture space is now rented from nearby Imperial College, Baden Powell House Conference Centre and the Institut Français.

3. Inspection process

In advance of this interim inspection, FIE sent the inspector a number of documents in electronic format relevant to his visit. He arrived at 9.30 and was given a tour of Foundation House by the Vice President – Operations and was introduced to senior staff. He then had a meeting with the Vice-President and the Chief Academic Officer to discuss progress since the last inspection, especially in relation to the recommendations made in the last report. He then met the Teaching and Learning Development Officer who demonstrated the online attendance monitoring system, the faculty and student 'lounges' on the college VLE, and showed him the systems for collecting, analysing and responding to student feedback. The feedback he sampled was very positive. He had a meeting with a group of students and a short interview with a member of the teaching staff. He requested and received a number of documents in hard copy. He left the college shortly before 1.00pm.

4. Inspection history

First full inspection:	27 September 2006
Interim inspection:	9 March 2010
Random spot check:	13 May 2011
Re-accreditation inspection:	25-26 January 2012

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

There have been no significant changes to the provision since the last inspection and no changes among the senior management team. A number of new courses have been introduced and resources for staff and students have been further developed. All classrooms now have interactive whiteboards. Additional teaching premises are now sometimes used in summer as detailed in above, but they were not in use at the time of this inspection. An additional floor is being added to the top of the building and this will expand storage and office space. FIE had a Recognition Scheme for Educational Oversight (RSEO) inspection by the QAA in May 2012, which reported Confidence, Confidence and Reliance for each of the three sections, followed by an entirely satisfactory Monitoring Review in June 2013.

2. Response to actions points in last report

There were no requirements in the 2012 report.

3. Recommendations made in last report to the institution

FIE should review overall capacity and room allocations/timetabling in view of growing student population and the cramped nature of some rooms. FIE managers should remind staff to notify registry of any late amendments to timetables and should consider publicising daily timetables adjacent to each classroom.

Room allocation and timetabling are constantly reviewed. A screen at reception now displays the day's room allocations and more information about times and classes are shown on a bulletin board.

FIE should carry out a formal check on the qualifications of visiting faculty tutors (used for open courses).

All new staff, both academic and administrative, are now required to produce their qualifications and credentials as part of the appointment process and existing staff have been asked to provide evidence of theirs. In addition, the Teaching and Learning Development Officer has completed a training session by UK National Recognition Information Centre (UKNARIC): 'Degrees of Deception – Combating Educational Fraud'.

FIE should review its scheduling of extracurricular visits and consider earlier notification of visit dates to students.

The college has responded by improving the pre-arrival information for students, which includes visit dates, and by introducing an online system for signing-up for optional extracurricular activities.

FIE should extend and strengthen its peer observation process to complement the existing observation and appraisal process undertaken by senior managers. This would facilitate better sharing of ideas and good practice and allow individual tutors to develop their pedagogic skills further to the benefit of students.

Three Course Conveners have been appointed from existing teaching staff to conduct peer observations and provide feedback. These observations occur for new staff shortly after appointment to FIE, for established staff teaching new courses, and for all staff periodically every two to three years. The introduction of peer observation has been generally welcomed. The Faculty Handbook 2013/14 includes a *Teaching Observation Form*, a *Teaching Observation – Faculty Feedback Form* and a *Faculty Assessment and Peer Feedback Form*.

FIE should consider moderation/verification of marking internally as part of the quality assurance process.

As well as peer-observation, cross marking has been introduced as part of the teacher’s assessment. Teachers are required to submit three samples of assessed students’ work (from a low achiever, a middle and a high achiever in the class), plus any failed work, to the Director of Academics at the end of the course.

FIE should consider producing a College-wide policy on discrimination and equal opportunities to bring together information contained in various documents such as partner contracts.

Policies relating to discrimination (safe spaces and zero tolerance) and equal opportunities (equal opportunities and accessibility) are now freely available on FIE’s website.

3. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements – spot check

3.1 Management, Staffing and Administration

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments None				

3.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments None				

3.3 Student Welfare

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments None				

3.4 Premises and Facilities

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments None				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Institution’s strengths

The conclusion and general summary in the 2012 report stated :

“The Foundation of International Education (FIE) provides high quality programmes, of varying lengths, for students from a number of universities in the USA. The course programmes are very well organised, student welfare is very thoroughly monitored, and the quality of the teaching and learning in lessons overall is good. Other than the need to develop further teachers' range of pedagogic techniques so that all teaching can be of the top quality, there are no requirements and only relatively minor recommendations to be made in order for FIE to be re-accredited and continue the reputable programmes it offers.”

FIE has made progress in responding to the recommendations in the report, particularly in the areas of offering professional development to staff and introducing some moderation of student work. The overall impression gained by the inspector from all he saw and the interviews he conducted with various staff and FIS students was entirely positive.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable None	