ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE
11 March 2021   Agenda Item 13.1

COVER SHEET

HTMi SINGAPORE: INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL

Presenter: Professor B Murphy

To consider the report and recommendation.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL REPORT: HOTEL & TOURISM MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE (HTMi) SINGAPORE

A recognition panel from Ulster University met with senior members of staff and programme team from HTMi, Singapore on 25th June 2020 to consider the institutional approval of the proposed partner of the University to deliver the following validated programme:

- BSc (Hons) International Hospitality Management (Level 6) FT

Recognition Panel Members:
- Professor Brian Murphy, Interim Dean of Academic Business Development, Ulster University (Chair)
- Dr Alisha Ali, Principal Lecturer, Department of Service Sector Management, Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University
- Professor Anita Eves, Professor of Hospitality, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Surrey
- Professor Una McMahon-Beattie, Head of Department of Leisure, Tourism and Hospitality, Ulster University Business School
- Dr Pamela Magee, Senior Lecturer in Human Nutrition, School of Biomedical Sciences, Ulster University

In attendance:
- Mrs Ursula Quinn, Senior Lecturer, Department of Leisure, Tourism and Hospitality, Ulster University Business School
- Mrs Carol Reid, Faculty Partnership Manager, Ulster University Business School
- Mrs Nicola Bartholomew, Lecturer in Academic Practice & Quality Enhancement Manager, Quality Enhancement, Ulster University (institutional approval)
- Ms Debbie Troy, Academic Policy and Standards Officer, Academic Office, Ulster University (course evaluation)

This report details the outcome of Due Diligence B Stage 2 comprising an online recognition event and panel discussion with Senior Management from HTMi including representation from Wong Fong Industries as the parent company. Due Diligence Stage 1 reviewed the arrangements which UUBS had established to manage and monitor the provision in order to secure quality standards. Due Diligence B Stage 1 had been concluded and approved at the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) on 04.06.20.

1. BACKGROUND

HTMi Singapore was founded in 2015 as a small, private educational institute and the sister-campus of HTMi Switzerland, which has been a long-established and valued partner with the Ulster Business School. Swiss campus has successfully delivered the BSc (Hons) International Hospitality Management (IHM) degree over the last 16 years, with two intakes per year and up to 30 students per intake. The partnership with HTMi Singapore enables diversification into another country with a low-risk partner and with scope to build provision in the longer term. HTMi Singapore will be a wholly owned subsidiary of Wong Fong Industries which is one of the leading providers of land transport engineering solutions and systems for various industries in Singapore, Malaysia and Myanmar, with a growing training and education business. The Wong Fong group conducts training in over 80 courses, many of which are

Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications-accredited, across diverse industries including hospitality.

In May, 2020, Ascendo International Holdings Pte. Ltd. (Ascendo), a subsidiary of Wong Fong Industries, acquired a share capital of HTMi Hotel and Tourism Management Institute Pte. Ltd (HTMi Singapore) from Mr. I. Lamour (vendor). Upon obtaining the Shareholders Approval, and assuming that the other conditions precedent under the Share Purchase Agreement have been satisfied, completion of the Proposed Acquisition is intended to take place on 1 July 2020. Upon completion in accordance with the SPA, Ascendo will be the legal and beneficial owner of the entire issued and paid-up share capital of HTMi Singapore. Ascendo International Holdings Pte is the part of the company which specialises in hospitality consultancy and training. The group is considered to be financially stable and is quoted on the Singapore Stock Exchange. Since 2018 the group has developed and extended its training and education provision and the acquisition of HTMi Singapore reflects the group's ambitions in tertiary education. The Wong Fong group identifies Ulster University; a top ranking HEI for hospitality and tourism, as a strategic partner to attract high quality students who will be well prepared for the industry.

2. VISION, MISSION & CORE VALUES

VISION:
The clear vision of HTMi (Singapore) is to be a leading hotel management institute in Singapore. To do this HTMi (Singapore)'s goal is to be a leading provider of professional hospitality management education, and to develop lifelong careers for students in the services sector.

MISSION:
"Come as a student, become a manager"
To maintain this culture of learning excellence, HTMi (Singapore) staff rigorously applies a teaching and learning methodology of establishing learning outcomes for each subject, which is then assessed using formative and summative work. Teaching in a blended learning environment is in the form of lectures, seminars, tutorials and independent learning. Students are encouraged to actively participate in class, give student presentations and learn in student groups. Our ultimate goal is to develop each student to become an independent learner, with strong critical appreciation and research skills. Finally, all student work is monitored and evaluated by a system of double marking and external examination.

Underpinning all teaching and learning is a strong English language and study skills support service.
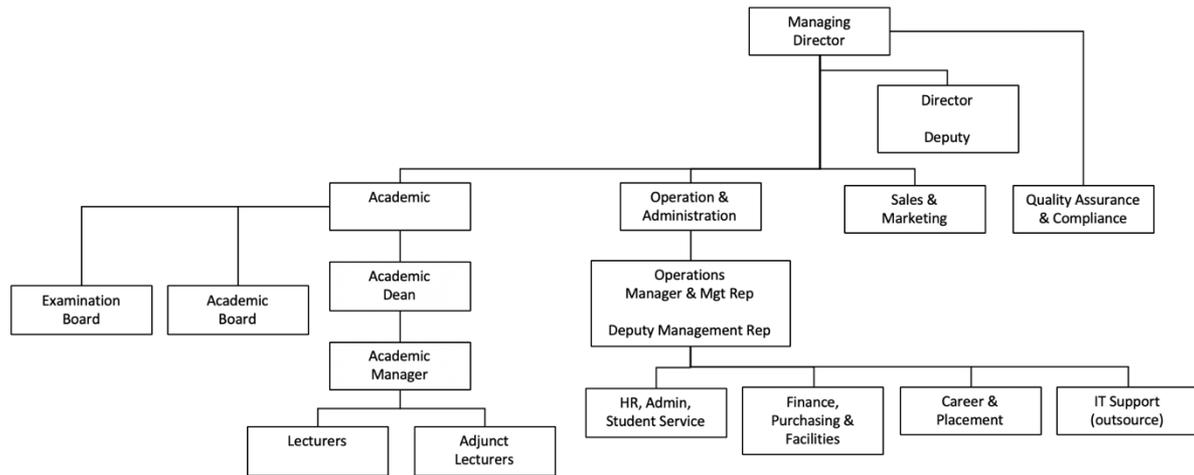
VALUES:
Values are derived from the principles of being successful in the hospitality industry; greeting and hosting people; being courteous and polite; being well groomed with proper deportment; being able to integrate with many different cultures; effective communication and use of common language; respect and integrity; being a lifelong and active learner; reflection and self – improvement; and striving for excellence.

A key part of the student-centred approach to the mission "Come as a student, become a manager" and the HTMi (Singapore) values is instilling professional behaviour and attitude skills. This is highly valued by employers of students and future graduates, as essential to success in the hospitality industry. Professional behaviour and attitude are monitored and graded by the staff team, and is part of the overall student marks.

ACADEMIC GOALS:

- Preserve and advance knowledge and enrich social, cultural and everyday life through teaching, learning, research and knowledge transfer.
- Provide teaching of the highest quality and encourage learning that will meet the personal and occupational needs of each student.
- Stimulate enterprise and creativity and promote awareness of the forces of international management and change.
- Nurture the values of all cultures and respect of diversity.

3. GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Managing Director
- Director / Deputy
  - Academic
    - Examination Board
    - Academic Board
    - Academic Dean
      - Academic Manager
        - Lecturers
        - Adjunct Lecturers
  - Operation & Administration
    - Operations Manager & Mgt Rep / Deputy Management Rep
      - HR, Admin, Student Service
      - Finance, Purchasing & Facilities
      - Career & Placement
      - IT Support (outsource)
  - Sales & Marketing
  - Quality Assurance & Compliance

The Academic Board comprises the Academic Dean (Chair), the Academic & Quality Assurance Manager and an adjunct lecturer

4. STANDARDS MANAGEMENT & QUALITY ASSURANCE

HTMi Singapore is seeking to become a recognised institution, in accordance with Ordinance XXVIII, to deliver a validated programme leading to an award of Ulster University. As a consequence, students studying at HTMi Singapore will belong to the University, and HTMi Singapore will comply with the University's standards management and quality assurance requirements. This includes their participation in the Continuous Assurance of Quality Enhancement (CAQE) cycle for programme monitoring. Programme performance data will be measured against established University benchmarks for collaborative partners. If the programme meets or exceeds benchmarks, it will remain within the allocated revalidation year within the quinquennial revalidation cycle. The approval panel confirmed that the BSc (Hons) International Hospitality Management programme would be approved for 5 years. The programme team, in collaboration with the Faculty Partnership Manager will maintain local quality monitoring through Course Committees, Student-Staff Course Committees, and Board of Examiners. A schedule for regular review of assessments with the Ulster team will be established. Any assessment modifications will be agreed with Ulster before being finalised.

There will be a minimum intake of 6 students during the first year due to the impact of Covid-19. The normal minimum will be 15 students, and a maximum intake of 60 students.

4.1 FASTRACK

The panel questioned the nature of the 20-week fast-track programme, due to the intensity of delivery and potential workload for staff and students. The partner team confirmed that the programme had been designed to replicate traditional Swiss hotel programmes which include intense programmes followed by 6-month internships, and that the fast-track nature was well suited to the local context. Additionally, the programme appeals to parents investing in students as the short programme and opportunity for industry experience offers value for

money. The Committee for Private Education (previously a statutory board under the Ministry for Education of Singapore) has approved the fast-track programme, and the condensed design allows students to enter the workplace earlier.

5. RESOURCES

5.1 Physical Resources

The panel enquired whether existing teaching space was sufficient if cohort sizes were to increase as planned. HTMi Singapore, currently occupies 6550 square feet of space with a modern teaching and learning environment. The facilities include 5 classrooms, 1 seminar room, a Learning Resource Centre with books and reading materials, a Front office training / Housekeeping training room, Swisstouches Cafe for Food and Beverage service training which also serves as the student café / lounge, a reception lounge area and 3 offices rooms. The team believed this teaching space to be appropriate and a phase 2 expansion of the building is planned with access to floor space above and below existing provision. The layout of rooms is already configured for scholarly activity. There is also existing space that can be converted to another training centre if necessary. Additionally, placement experience is well supported due to the central location of premises, surrounded by hotels.

The panel enquired whether a maintenance policy exists for physical resources. The team confirmed that equipment was bought with a service warranty and that any broken or malfunctioning equipment would be replaced as needed. More training equipment will be purchased as cohorts expand.

5.2 Staff Resources

The small programme team is largely comprised of part-time lecturers however, they are highly experienced team with a broad range of academic and industrial experience. Part time contracts are typical for teaching teams in S.E. Asia, and academic staff work across other Schools.

HTMi Singapore confirmed they were committed to academic staff development and are accountable to the Council for Private Education to which they evidence internal and external development opportunities on an annual basis.

5.3 Library Resources

The team confirmed that library space and study areas were sufficient. Students also have the option to visit the local civic library which is open 24 hours and includes a section dedicated to hospitality. Students are also inducted to and have full access to Emerald, a publisher of academic journals. The National Library has well-developed online systems including electronic journals dedicated to hospitality and business management. Student membership to the National Library is established during their induction. HTMi Singapore will also join the Institute of Hospitality which offers a range of online resources. The team were advised that there will be a requirement to purchase additional textbooks for level 6 prior to the first intake of students. Current reading lists will need refining to reflect these additions.

The Ulster University librarian made the following recommendations through CA10a:

- If plans for student recruitment are fully met at the top end of projections and the draft reading lists are revised appropriately, an initial budget of $5K is needed to purchase needed print material in the quantities required for the 6 modules in the top-up programme.
- An annual recurring budget of $4K will be needed for electronic resources which will facilitate the purchase of the Institute of Hospitality's online service along with the Emerald journals package. An annual recurring budget for new book editions and extra copies as student numbers grow will be approximately $1K.

- The current library space is adequate for the level of student demand. However, space requirements must be kept under review as the number of students grow and the print collection expands along with the need to accommodate more IT facilities for student use.
- Opening hours should be kept under review drawing on student feedback as necessary, especially as the campus expands.
- Close collaboration should be maintained with the University Library in the future development of the HTMi (Singapore) library service. The University's Business Librarian will provide support to the HTMi library supervisor in terms of advice on current library practices and services as well as guidance on resource development and available business information services.
- With future expansion of the campus size, it is recommended that HTMi creates a part-time post dedicated to developing the library service, providing an information service to support students and to champion library matters as they relate to the wider learning community and the strategic goals of the Institute.

The team are collaborating with Ulster University librarian and a commitment to purchase additional texts and access to e-journals has been established.

5.4 IT Resources

The ICT contact from Ulster University confirmed that based on the content outlined within programme documents, the IT resources and facilities will be adequate for the proposed programme.

Students are given instruction on the use of HISP (VLE) that contains all teaching materials, and learning activities including quiz materials, forums or chat facilities. HISP facilitates tutor-student and student-student engagement. Google Meet is also used to support synchronous discussions. Turnitin is deployed to identify potential plagiarism as all assessment will be online. Academic staff are trained on identifying academic misconduct.

6   STUDENT SUPPORT

A career centre team within Student Services provides assistance to students for placement opportunities, providing guidance on PDP and CV development and liaison with industrial partners. Additionally, counselling services are available to students who experience psychological or emotional issues during their course of study.

Students attend a robust induction/transition programme and additional support is available for English language, research and academic writing skills. A student services manager has regular meetings with students to gather feedback on their experiences which is then shared with the programme team.

7   RECOMMENDATIONS

The Recognition Panel agreed to recommend to the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) that HTMi Singapore be recognised as a collaborative partner of the University to deliver validated programmes.

RECOMMENDATION: That a Memorandum of Recognition be signed for a period of 5 years (intakes 2020/2021 – 2024/25

Conclusions from the Course Evaluation are identified in the Report of a meeting of the evaluation panel at HTMi Singapore, compiled by Academic Office.

NB
June 2020