



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION NEW / ADDITIONAL PREMISES (Independent Higher Education)

INSTITUTION: INSTEP-WFU

ADDRESS: Marlborough House
38 Marlborough Place
London
NW8 0PJ

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr Philip Davies

DATE OF INSPECTION: 6 June 2018

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION ON ACCREDITATION: Continued accreditation 27 September 2018

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

The Institute of Economic and Political Studies (INSTEP) commenced teaching students from American universities at its London site from 1979 and at its Cambridge site from 1986. In the summer of 2017, INSTEP became a wholly owned subsidiary of Wake Forest University, which is based in North Carolina, United States of America (USA). This resulted in a name change to INSTEP-WFU.

The London site, which is the United Kingdom (UK) registered office, is also the teaching and administrative space for the London provision. It is leased from the St Nicholas Training Centre for the Montessori Method of Education Limited (MSN). In April 2018, the London office moved location, from Balderton Street in central London to Marlborough Place, which is located two miles to the north west of the previous location. The new premises are in a large property that was originally developed for residential use. They have been redesigned effectively for office and teaching use. INSTEP-WFU continues to lease their space in this building from MSN. The location of the Cambridge centre has not changed and is based close to the centre of Cambridge.

The aim of INSTEP-WFU is to work with a consortium of American universities to provide second and third year undergraduates with the opportunity to spend one or two semesters studying in London and Cambridge. This reflects the practice of many UK and American universities of offering credit rated study abroad opportunities at overseas universities. The purpose of such programmes is to broaden the experience for participants in respect of their academic courses as they are exposed to experiences that would not normally be on offer in their home universities. The programmes also permit students to experience different cultural environments.

INSTEP-WFU has five directors including two UK resident directors in London and Cambridge, both of whom report directly to the Program Director at Wake Forest University.

2. Brief description of the current provision

INSTEP-WFU delivers semester programmes. These offer a cross-disciplinary approach in which central themes are examined from the areas of economics, business, finance, political economy, international relations, politics, law, history, English literature, and communications. The courses run at the London centre include the Middle East and Political Islam, Law and Society, the New Europe and Contemporary Britain. The Cambridge centre courses include Economic Theory: the Cambridge tradition, Geopolitics in the Twenty-first Century and the Theory of Finance.

In recent years approximately 30 students have participated in courses each year. At the time of the inspection, there were eleven American students studying at the Cambridge centre, the majority of whom were female. They were all aged 20 or over. There were no students at the London centre.

The courses are taught by academics from Cambridge University and a number of London universities, who have significant research and publication profiles.

To be eligible to participate in the study abroad programme, students must have a grade point average of 3.0 or above. Grade point average is the mean average of the grades for all courses previously studied on a scale of one to four. Students must enrol for five courses, each of which carries three credits. Students therefore receive a maximum of fifteen credits on successful completion of their studies. These credits are confirmed through Wake Forest University and contribute towards their overall degree classification in their home university. Teaching is normally provided in small groups.

There are approximately ten American universities that are members of the INSTEP-WFU affiliate group including Tulane and Arizona State. All students on INSTEP programmes are second or third year undergraduates aged 20 or over. Each of the UK centres caters for a relatively small number of students.

Students can apply throughout the calendar year for admission to the autumn and spring semesters. The closing date for acceptance for admission is approximately three months prior to the semester commencement date.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was undertaken by one inspector who spent half a day at the new London Centre. The inspection involved an interview with the London Centre Director, who is also the Head of the Institution, a review of various documents and a tour of the teaching and office facilities. The website was also reviewed.

4. Inspection history

Full Accreditation:	17-18 November 2008
Supplementary:	28 May 2009
Interim:	24 March 2010
Re-accreditation:	12 & 29 November 2012
Interim:	29 January 2015
Re-accreditation:	19 & 26 October 2016
Interim and Supplementary:	1 February 2018

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

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

The numbers below refer to the standards as presented in the Independent Higher Education scheme document and main full inspection report

INSPECTION AREA – PREMISES AND FACILITIES

20. The institution has secure possession of and access to its premises

20.1	The institution has secure tenure on its premises	YES		
20.2	The institution has the legal right to use these premises for the delivery of higher education	YES		
20.3	Where required, the institution has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature.	YES		
		Met	Partially met	Not met
	This standard is judged to be	✓		
Comments:				
<p>INSTEP-WFU leases office space from the St Nicholas Training Centre for the Montessori Method of Education Limited within their building at Marlborough Place. The arrangement is the same as was in place at the previous building in Balderton Street and signed lease documents are in place, scanned copies have been viewed post inspection.</p> <p>In addition, INSTEP-WFU has secured access to the University of London Senate Library and to Student Central for their students, which provide good student support facilities.</p> <p>Additional teaching premises are available in London if required, however the space at Marlborough Place is expected to meet the needs of the Institution.</p> <p>The Provider has moved its registered office to the new location. However, at the time of the inspection they were still to update the address with Companies House.</p>				

21. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff

21.1	Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured.	YES		
21.2	The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness	YES		
21.3	There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories), made readily available to students, staff and visitors.	N/A		
21.4	General guidance on health and safety is made available to students, staff and visitors.	YES		
21.5	There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information.	YES		
21.6	There is adequate circulation space for the number of students and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors.	YES		
21.7	There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness.	YES		
21.8	There is adequate air conditioning, heating and ventilation in all rooms.	YES		
		Met	Partially met	Not met
	This standard is judged to be	✓		
Comments:				
<p>Access from the street is controlled through locked gates with an intercom and camera system. This is effective. The facilities have been decorated prior to the move and are in a good state of repair.</p>				

There are no specialist facilities with particular hazards as the disciplines taught do not require such facilities.

Health and safety arrangements are managed effectively by the St Nicholas Training Centre for the Montessori Method of Education Limited which is responsible for the premises. Appropriate communication methods regarding health and safety are in place and include notices regarding fire evacuation in classrooms. Emergency fire exit routes are signposted throughout the building and there is a reception area where visitors sign in and are provided with any necessary safety information.

There is adequate signage inside and outside the building. INSTEP-WFU is able to communicate to its students effectively, primarily through electronic platforms rather than physical noticeboards as this approach is more effective for the students.

The facilities are of a good standard and an improvement on the previous location. The premises provide adequate clean toilet facilities and suitably ventilated and heated office and teaching areas.

22. Classrooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered

22.1	Classrooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them.	YES		
22.2	Classrooms and any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each course.	YES		
22.3	There are facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required on each course.	N/A		
		Met	Partially met	Not met
This standard is judged to be		✓		
Comments:				
The premises provide appropriate teaching spaces to accommodate the number of students expected. There are classrooms and meeting rooms with adequate desk space and the classrooms have suitable Information Technology (IT) and projection facilities required for the effective delivery of the courses.				
There is no requirement for specialist facilities such as laboratories, workshops or studios.				
Assessment is undertaken through coursework, therefore there is no requirement for specific facilities for assessments.				

23. There are appropriate additional facilities for students and staff

23.1	Students have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private study, including library and IT resources.	YES		
23.2	Teaching staff have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation.	YES		
23.3	Students and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate.	YES		
23.4	Students and staff have access to storage for personal possessions where appropriate.	YES		
23.5	There are individual offices or rooms in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings.	YES		
23.6	Administrative offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the institution.	YES		
		Met	Partially met	Not met
This standard is judged to be		✓		
Comments:				

The facilities provided for students and staff are in good order and have been recently decorated. They are of a higher standard than the previous venue.

Students have access to the classrooms and meeting rooms for private study and relaxation if required. There is wireless internet access throughout the building.

INSTEP-WFU has agreements to enable students to access the London University's Senate House Library.

Staff generally undertake course preparation in their own time away from the teaching locations either in their offices at their primary employer or at home. Nevertheless, appropriate office space, IT and print or copy facilities are available as required that meet staff needs.

Storage facilities are available for students' personal possessions in the Director's office if required.

The Director has an office in the building that is appropriate and provides adequate space for the work required and storage of essential materials such as the course texts that are provided to the students. This space can be used for private meetings as required and additional rooms are available for booking for private meetings that involve larger groups of people.

PART C – SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

ACTIONS REQUIRED	Priority H/M/L
None	

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
It is recommended that the Provider updates the company details lodged with Companies House.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	
Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	
	YES
Further comments, if applicable	
The actions and recommendations from the previous interim and supplementary inspection report were discussed and the provider is making good progress in addressing the matters identified. These will need to be followed up in more detail at the next inspection. INSTEP-WFU have indicated that there is a possibility of a relocation again in approximately 12 months' time. They have been advised to keep the BAC office informed of these developments.	