

Policy on International Activities

1. INTRODUCTION

International activities are an important dimension of the work of HMIE and complement all four of our strategic priorities. They help to build the reputation of Scottish education abroad, inform thinking about policy within Scotland, allow HMIE to learn as an organisation and contribute to the continuing professional development of individual inspectors.

HMIE's international activities can be classified as follows:

- 1) receiving international visitors, the main purpose of which is sharing HMIE's expertise;
- 2) receiving international visitors, the main purpose of which is learning for HMIE;
- 3) outward international visits, the main purpose of which is sharing HMIE's expertise;
- 4) outward international visits, the main purpose of which is learning for HMIE;
- 5) inspecting, reporting and disseminating good practice in international education in schools and pre-school settings;
- 6) international dimensions of college activity; and
- 7) membership of international groups and involvement in long-term international projects.

The Scottish Government's International Engagement Plan for Education and Lifelong Learning (Appendix 1) supports the purpose of creating a more successful country where all of Scotland can flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth. It organises international activities around the following three themes.

- 1) How the Scottish Government promotes a smarter Scotland to others - at home and abroad – for economic, cultural, social and diplomatic aims.
- 2) How Scottish education and lifelong learning (ELL) policies and performance compare with other countries.
- 3) What Scotland can learn from other countries in the ELL field to make its ELL framework even better and more effective in helping deliver sustainable economic growth in Scotland.

HMIE's international activities support the Scottish Government's International Engagement Plan for Education and Lifelong Learning.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The Scottish Government's International Engagement Plan for Education and Lifelong Learning sets out the following principle.

We should:-

- *always be prepared to meet foreign Ministers who visit Scotland;*
- *try to meet foreign delegations at the most appropriate level, and ensure that they also meet relevant Scottish bodies.*

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HMIE will follow the above principle as far as possible in the context of HMIE's business needs and the availability of human resources.

We shall ensure a suitable balance across our international activities between sharing HMIE's expertise and learning for HMIE. We have identified the need for a greater proportion of activities which involve learning for HMIE, in particular more international visitors to HMIE who support our learning.

The following principles will apply when deciding whether to receive international visitors who want to learn about our work and whether and how much to charge them.

SICI member inspectorates

We shall encourage and support the development of the SICI Virtual Inspection Academy to ensure cost-effective sharing of expertise. We shall contribute to a bank of training materials and take part in virtual training events, for example using video conferencing. We are committed to encouraging more effective networking, including through an improved SICI website. The aim will be to reduce the amount of HMI time taken up hosting visits, especially repeat visits by groups from the same country. There will normally be no charge for receiving visitors from SICI member inspectorates. Where we are providing a longer training programme for SICI member inspectorates, we shall agree a charge to cover HMIE time.

Other UK inspectorates

We have regular contacts with other UK inspectorates to exchange experiences and expertise. There will be no charge for these activities which are recognised as mutually beneficial in all cases.

Other inspectorates

We shall take account of the relative stages of development of each inspectorate when prioritising & setting costs.

Other visitors:

Ministerial visits and senior level officials from other countries will not be subject to a cost where it is a short visit or presentation. Education personnel on official business wishing to have a short meeting with HMIE will not be charged.

For more extended work where we are providing training, we shall ensure that HMIE protocols are followed. We would expect to have at least 4 working weeks notice of any visit. Where extended training of more than 2 days is agreed, a notice period of at least 8 weeks would be required for planning and releasing staff.

We shall use Assistant Inspectors to help host international visitors when appropriate. For each visit, a number of days payment will be agreed in advance. There will be an assumption that a day includes both preparation time and time spent with international visitors (presenting, accompanying them on visits to schools etc).

In order to avoid any possibility of the integrity and fairness of an inspection being called into question, no international visitors will join inspection teams. The exception to this will be college reviews, where the size of the team means that the same risks do not arise. We shall include visits to recently inspected or reviewed establishments and services in programmes for international visitors as appropriate. Where appropriate, visitors might join a district inspector on a follow-through visit where it is not leading directly to evaluations or a report to parents.

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3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR AND INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

A Chief Inspector (CI) (currently the CI, Director 5) will exercise a strategic overview of HMIE activity in international activities.

The CI will be supported by an Assistant Chief Inspector (ACI) (currently the Acting ACI, Directorate 1) and a Business Manager (currently the Business Manager for Directorate 5).

For each Business Plan year, the CI and the ACI will identify a small core group of HMII who take the lead in delivering programmes for international visitors to HMIE. These HMII will be allocated 5 days (INTERNATIONAL task) in their management plans to allow for preparation and participation in these programmes.

Other Directorates and other individual HMII, AIs or Corporate Services colleagues will also be involved in international activities, as agreed by the CI or the ACI responsible for international activities, in consultation with the Senior Chief Inspector where appropriate.

In recognition of the fact that participation in international activities is an effective form of continuing professional development, the CI and the ACI responsible for international activities, in consultation with other Directorates and/or the Senior Chief Inspector where appropriate, will ensure that as many HMII as possible have the opportunity to be involved at some point.

The National Specialist for International Education will report to the ACI responsible for international activities and be responsible for:

- maintaining an evaluative overview of international education in schools, pre-schools and learning communities;
- disseminating good practice in international education;
- providing advice to Ministers and others when required;
- attending relevant conferences and events; and
- producing and updating reports and self-evaluation guides as appropriate.

Directorate 4 will liaise with the Scottish Government on the international dimensions of further and higher education. They will produce reports on the international dimensions of college activities and develop international links in the college sector as appropriate.

4. OTHER RELEVANT OR RELATED POLICIES OR STRATEGIES

The following policies/strategies adopted by HMIE or being formulated at the date of this policy are of direct relevance to international activities and will be taken into account where relevant.

- Communications policy and strategy
- Good Practice policy and strategy
- Human Resources policy and strategy

5. IMPLEMENTATION, QUALITY ASSURANCE & REPORTING PROCEDURES

The CI, ACI and Business Manager with responsibility for international activities will meet once a month to plan, support, implement and evaluate all international activities.

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The CI will report to SMG at least once a year and more frequently as appropriate.
The CI will provide a full report to MB once a year.

The ACI and the Business Manager will assist the CI in the preparation of reports.

6. REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed in December 2009.

7. CONTACT DETAILS

Any comments or queries on this policy should be addressed to:

BMCT, HM Inspectorate of Education, 2nd Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Way,
Livingston EH54 6GA.

telephone: 01506 600265

e-mail: rona.littleproud@hmie.gsi.gov.uk