

Policy on International Activities

1. INTRODUCTION

HMIE's international activities are a key component of the organisation's core business. They are intended to strengthen HMIE's international reputation, and its positive influence, as a leader of thinking and practice in educational evaluation and improvement. The activities aim to:

- build the reputation of HMIE and, more generally, Scottish education and lifelong learning abroad;
- contribute to capacity building in Scottish education and across the international education community;
- inform thinking about education and lifelong learning policy within Scotland;
- allow HMIE to learn as an organisation, from and with colleagues from other countries; and
- contribute to the continuing professional development of individual inspectors.

HMIE's international activities support the Scottish Government's International Engagement Plan for Education and Lifelong Learning¹. In particular, the activities promote a Smarter Scotland to others and ensure that Scotland learns from other countries.

HMIE's international activities include receiving international visitors; making presentations and providing advice on quality improvement to senior educationists and government ministers from other countries; addressing international conferences; membership of international groups; and involvement in long-term international projects including training of inspectors. 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.

HMIE also identifies and disseminates good practice in international learning as part of our professional policy advice to Ministers, and in schools and other educational settings. This helps to ensure that learners of all ages experience high quality international learning as part of *Curriculum for Excellence*, *Skills for Scotland* and other relevant policies.

¹ See Appendix 1

2. INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT: THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S PURPOSE

The Scottish Government's International Engagement Plan for Education and Lifelong Learning 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 all of the above themes.

3. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

HMIE is committed to working with others to support and enhance international activities and so achieve synergies and efficiencies across these activities. Partner organisations include Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS), the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) and the British Council.

We share information about our international activities with Scottish Government officials and others as appropriate.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In all cases, the purposes and intended outcomes of the engagement will be established at the outset. These should relate directly to the aims of HMIE's international activities.

We shall plan a suitable balance across our international activities between sharing our expertise and learning from others, in order to meet the aims set out above.

In line with the Scottish Government's International Engagement Plan for Education and Lifelong Learning, and where possible in the context of our business needs and the availability of resources, 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.

We shall consider the benefits of focusing upon strategic partnerships which are likely to yield the greatest benefit to HMIE, as well as to partners.

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We shall ensure that time, staffing and other costs to HMIE are assessed and taken fully into account in responding to the requests to receive foreign visitors, and in decisions about travelling to conferences and other events outwith Scotland.

When hosting international visitors, we shall normally charge a daily rate (currently £639 or €708) to cover costs. In some cases, we may charge a discounted daily rate (currently £332 or €368), or less in special cases. The Chief Inspector with responsibility for international activities will make the final decision on the rates to be charged, based upon an assessment of the costs and benefits to HMIE.

We would expect to have at least four working weeks notice of any visit. Where extended training of more than two days is agreed, a notice period of at least eight weeks would be required for planning and releasing staff.

We shall make increasing use of video conferencing or other electronic means such as Skype to enable inspectors to contribute to conferences and other events outwith Scotland while reducing the time spent on travel and the costs involved.

We shall encourage and support the development of the SICI (Standing International Conference of Inspectorates) Inspection Academy (SIA)² to ensure cost-effective sharing of expertise. We shall encourage more effective and extensive networking with sister organisations, including through the improved SICI website.

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. When requested, we shall arrange visits to recently inspected or reviewed establishments and services in programmes for international visitors. Where appropriate, visitors might join a district inspector on a school visit when it is not leading directly to evaluations or a report to parents.

On completion of each activity, we shall evaluate as far as possible the impact and the success of the activity in achieving its identified aims.

5. RESPONSIBILITY FOR AND INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

A Chief Inspector (CI) (currently the CI, Directorate 5) will exercise a strategic overview of HMIE's international activities.

The CI will be supported by an Assistant Chief Inspector (ACI) (currently the ACI HR/Equalities), a National Specialist (NS) for International Education 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 Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMII) who take the lead in delivering programmes for

² See Appendix 2

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international visitors to HMIE. These HMII will be allocated time under the International task (INTERNAT) in their management plans to allow for preparation and participation in these programmes.

Other Directorates and other individual HMII, Assistant Inspectors or Corporate Services colleagues will also be involved in international activities, as agreed by the CI or the ACI above, 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 NS for International Education will report to the ACI responsible for international activities and be responsible for aspects including:

- 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;
- participating in relevant conferences and events;
- producing and updating reports and self-evaluation guides as appropriate; and
- supporting work with international visitors to HMIE and other international activities.

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.

6. 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
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Good Practice policy and strategy
- Human Resources policy and strategy
- Research policy and strategy

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7. IMPLEMENTATION, QUALITY ASSURANCE & REPORTING PROCEDURES

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

We are committed to strengthening approaches to monitoring and recording the impact of all its international activities. This will include seeking formal feedback on the programmes we organise for international visitors and on our input to conferences and other events. This will allow us to:

- evaluate the extent to which we are achieving the aims listed in the introduction; and
- report in more detail on the impact of our work.

The CI will report to SMG at least once a year and more frequently as appropriate. The CI will provide a full report to Management Board once a year. The ACI, NS and Business Manager will assist the CI in the preparation of reports. Details of international activities, including outcomes and impact, will be included in *HMIE Performs* and in our Annual Report and Accounts.

8. REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed in February 2011.

9. CONTACT DETAILS

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

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2nd Floor, Denholm House, Almondvale Way, Livingston EH54 6GA.

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Appendices and Links

1. [Scottish Government International Engagement Plan for Education and Lifelong Learning](#)
2. SICI Inspection Academy
3. [pro forma: application for permission to attend a course of conference within the UK](#)
4. [pro forma: application for permission to attend a conference and official visits outside the UK](#)
5. [Link to international activities database](#)
6. [Link to international activities area of HMIE website](#)

Appendix 1: Scottish Government International Engagement Plan for Education and Lifelong Learning

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline a portfolio-wide **International Engagement Plan for Education and Lifelong Learning (ELL)** which supports the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy and the National Performance Framework of *focusing Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth*. The plan also takes forward the International Perspective principle of the Smarter objective³.

Strategic Context *National Performance Framework and Concordat*

The Scottish Government's National Performance Framework provides a set of seven high level targets and the five strategic objectives – wealthier & fairer, **smarter**, healthier, safer and stronger and greener. These are supported by 15 national outcomes and a set of 45 national indicators set out and agreed with COSLA on 14 November 2007. The Government's Budget Spending review document⁴ stated that "A Smarter Scotland will identify and address risks to its children, young people and families, so they can develop and flourish. A Smarter Scotland will provide everyone with relevant opportunities to learn. The benefits will be realised in a society where the opportunity to succeed is within everyone's reach and where full use is made of people's skills. A Smarter Scotland will drive a growing economy and will generate the kind of thinking and technologies which protect and improve health, wellbeing and the environment". It also stated that "We need to protect and bolster the international reputation we enjoy for excellence in education and apply a global perspective to our approach and ambitions".

Scottish Government's International Framework⁵

The Scottish Government's International framework published on 23 April 2008 outlines three goals for Scotland's performance as a nation. These are:-

- Creating the conditions for talented people to live, learn, visit, work and remain in Scotland;
- Bringing a sharp economic growth focus to the promotion of Scotland abroad; and
- Managing Scotland's reputation as a distinctive global identity, an independent minded and responsible nation at home and abroad and confident of its place in the world.

³ Our focus should be on Scotland and Scotland's place in the world – challenging our ambitions against the achievement of other countries to bring about further improvements in performance and aiming to have a confident sense of self.

⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/203078/0054106.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/221041/0059464.pdf>

This International Engagement Plan is the Education and Lifelong Learning portfolio's contribution to the Scottish Government's International Framework.

Delivering the plan

Our future international engagement in the ELL portfolio should be organised around the following three themes:-

- 4) How we **promote a Smarter Scotland** to others - at home and abroad – for economic, cultural, social and diplomatic aims;
- 5) How our ELL policies and performance **compare** with other countries;
- 6) What we can **learn** from other countries in the ELL field to make our ELL framework even better and more effective in helping deliver sustainable economic growth in Scotland.

This approach is not just what the Government wants – it is a “whole country” approach – with all public bodies involved in the portfolio moving in the same direction. By taking a 'Team Scotland' approach it recognises that key stakeholders also have a contribution to make to the policies, priorities and messages of Scottish Government.

1. Promoting a Smarter Scotland

Why. Promoting a Smarter Scotland as a society where full use is made of everyone's skills and where children's wellbeing is paramount will yield direct returns. This will, inter alia, attract students here for our excellent education, science strength and the “Scottish experience”; it could also attract and retain migrants and inward investors. Furthermore it will enhance Scotland's name and reputation across the world.

What. Scotland has a well-established international reputation for the quality of its education sector and a distinguished tradition of public provision in ELL from birth to adulthood. This is exemplified by our excellent early years provision and Children's Hearings system, our long-established commitment to universal school education, our extensive network of colleges and our world class universities and science education and research.

How. We need to vary the promotion tools and material depending on the audience and circumstances. We should use:

- **Ministerial visits abroad** to specific countries to promote our whole Education provision from early years to lifelong learning, but particularly our colleges and universities with the aim of increasing international students to study here, developing further academic and research collaborations and generally raising the profile of Scottish education.
- **Invitations to foreign Education Ministers / EU Commissioners to visit Scotland** – either directly or indirectly to promote and market Scotland as a place to live, learn, visit, work, do business and invest in. We should concentrate on independent nations but not discount other important administrations.

- **Attendance at International Conferences / Meetings.** We can seek to host prestigious international events in Scotland and solicit and take up invitations to International Conferences and events. These need to be meaningful, a good use of time and judged good value.
- **Promoting our expertise and excellence.** Scottish education has consistently innovated and we have developed expertise / excellence and are world-leaders in a wide variety of areas. We respond to requests for information on these but could do more to promote these proactively in key target areas.

We should also:-

- 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.

We must promote ourselves more coherently – both at home to visitors here and when we travel abroad. We must also promote Scotland and its reputation more generally - as a responsible, caring nation at home and abroad with a distinctive global identity and confident of its place in the world ie we must fulfil an ambassadorial role. In order to do this we need to know what others' international business involves and promote Scotland's education and children's services more broadly and coherently. We must also share information on foreign visits and visitors with each other – both upcoming visits and information from past visits.

2. Comparing ourselves with other countries.

Why. International comparisons can provide us with a variety of data about policies, processes, systems and performance. By comparing ourselves objectively - in terms of outputs, outcomes, and policies and why they deliver what they do - we can more effectively challenge our ambitions against the achievement of other countries.

What. We already engage in many surveys with many international bodies across the portfolio - from children's wellbeing to adult education to the competitiveness of our research. We also commission specific international studies (eg the recent OECD review of the quality and equity of schooling in Scotland) and work with other bodies on international comparisons (eg the Scottish Funding Council on benchmarking our college and university education). Other information sources such as Eurydice and Eurobarometer are valuable when comparing our system with other countries.

How. We need to communicate our involvement in international comparison exercises more widely within the ELL portfolio, explain better what we derive from these and identify the research and other activities in which we take part. .

3. Learning from other countries.

Why. Having compared our approaches and outcomes we can take good ideas and concepts that deliver outcomes in other countries that we seek for ourselves and

translate them into our system - where feasible. By doing so we can help deliver sustainable economic growth in Scotland.

What. Successful policy transfer requires a good understanding of differences in context and of causal linkages gained through developing an in-depth understanding of the ideas and concepts and their implementation. Now we have 15 national outcomes we want to achieve we should focus our attention on those countries that achieve these outcomes and learn from them.

How. There are several channels such as:-

- **Using research** articles / reports to establish facts and gather information.
- Arranging **specific fact-finding visits to countries at Ministerial or official level** as appropriate. This enables direct engagement and yields sustained contacts and specific learning outcomes.
- **Using international meetings** – such as EU Councils / Commonwealth / OECD / Council of Europe meetings etc to discuss ELL policies and outcomes in the margins; these can also lead to subsequent visits and contacts.
- **Using existing schemes** such as the EU Transversal scheme to enable study visits to other countries.
- **Taking part in European and International networks** such as the Bologna Follow Up Group / OECD Directors.

Having visited a country / met with such contacts, a report on the visit should be produced including how the lessons learned will be pursued. This should be disseminated widely within Government and amongst Agencies and NDPBs. A 'Team Scotland' approach here with all public bodies working together will maximise the impact of such visits and the learning outcomes and derive added value for the public purse.

Who are our key partners in promoting, comparing and learning from others?

This is not an exhaustive list but the Scottish Government will work closely with the following key bodies to deliver this plan:- HMIE; SWIA, SQA; LTS; COSLA, GTCS, SSSC, SCRA, Universities Scotland; Scotland's Colleges International; QAA Scotland; British Council Scotland; Education UK Scotland; Royal Society of Edinburgh, and Scottish Initiative for International Development Sciences.

Where (what countries) and in what form should we promote; compare and learn from?

This very much depends on circumstances, what we are seeking to do (promote, compare ourselves or learn from a country). In principle we should be ready to promote ourselves to any country seeking information on, or showing an interest in, Scottish education. The chart at **Annex A** is an attempt to show, across all portfolio areas and the three themes, the main countries and fora DG Education in the Scottish Government will concentrate on. This is not exclusive, merely an illustrative guide, as specific policy areas may have very good reasons for engaging with other countries for their interests.

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International Teams

Scottish Government, DG Education - Schools; CYPSC; LLL, and Science

Directorates

September 2008

Appendix 2: Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI) Inspection Academy

The SICI Inspection Academy (SIA) is currently in development. It aims to provide a context, both real and virtual, within and through which SICI members can share expertise, learn from each other and form authoritative views on inspection issues. Members will be able to provide and receive support, training and development to their mutual benefit.

As currently envisaged, SIA will have three main, interlinking components.

- A spectrum of opportunities to meet in face-to-face contexts. These “learning and training” events build on traditional SICI workshops, of which three or four are held in any year in different member countries. They range from full-scale SICI-sponsored strategic workshops to local training and development workshops with SICI input and involving only one or two members.
- A specialised, contracted, training arrangement involving SICI expertise in the development and training of inspectors in, usually, a single member state. Such events would be organised at the request of the member state and most probably be funded externally.
- An electronic database for the storage of information about inspection practices in member states, including inspection instruments, available expertise in specific areas and an indication of development needs and priorities. All SICI members have been asked to fill in a questionnaire seeking this information and returns will form the initial basis of the database. Work is currently underway to develop the SICI website to include the interactive capacity to facilitate this component of SIA.

HMIE will continue to send a representative to the major SICI workshops where themes are relevant. The option remains open to host a workshop if that fits the purposes of developing internal expertise. HMIE will also respond positively, where possible and consistent with this policy, to requests from SIA to provide expertise to other SICI members. It is expected that the database, when operational, will provide a good source of information on key inspection themes within a very broad European context, from which HMIE and individual inspectors may benefit.