



International Centre  
of Excellence in  
**Tourism and Hospitality  
Education (THE-ICE)**

## **Annual Report**

### **2020–21**

**International Centre of Excellence in Tourism  
and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE)**

# Annual Report 2020/21

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## 1. Introduction

The year 2020/21 was yet again another challenging one for THE-ICE and our members worldwide.

The year started with our first (and hopefully last) entirely virtual IPoE Forum, with the event hosted by the University of Derby deferred until 2021. The VIPoE 2020 was well attended and well received, but the face to face interaction, so important to THE-ICE, was sorely missed.

The early part of 2021 was marked by accreditation activity, which saw a couple of new members from new member countries joining THE-ICE, as well as two successful re-accreditation events. Things continued on a very positive note in 2021 with the development of collaborative agreements (as detailed in Section 4.3 of this report).

However, the continuation and deepening of the COVID-19 pandemic hit THE-ICE and our members worldwide, resulting in ongoing disruption.

THE-ICE has endeavoured to continue to support members through the crisis, through THE-ICE Webinar Series and the upcoming 14<sup>th</sup> International Panel of Experts (IPoE) Forum 2021, offered in blended format (face to face and virtual), as well as through the launch of new initiatives, including THE-ICE Global Revenue Management (GRM) Challenge.

The annual report 2020-21, which reports on the period between the VIPoE 2020 (October 2020) and the IPoE Forum 2021 (October 2021), is a reflection and product of this turbulent period.

The Report follows the format established in the 2018-19 report, being factual and focused in format and holistic in construct, embodying our commitment to inclusivity and collegiality. By adopting this approach, we hope this and future reports will inform all our stakeholders in an increasingly comprehensive and transparent manner.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank our members for their substantial and tangible support during these very difficult times: your commitment to THE-ICE and its ideals displays the best of both education and hospitality. To my fellow, and recently departed, directors on the Board, and especially my Deputy Chair, thank you for your selfless labours to ensure that THE-ICE remains strategically sound and financially sustainable for the long term. And last, but certainly not least, to our CEO and his Executive Team for their relentless hard work to ensure that our existing and prospective members' needs are addressed and supported in the most professional, yet collegiate manner. I am in debt to, and awe of, you all.

We hope you enjoy reading this Report and look forward to working with you towards the ongoing development and enhancement of THE-ICE.



**Paul A Whitelaw (PhD)**  
**Chair**  
**THE-ICE Board**

## 2. Governance

### 2.1 A Framework for Engagement

THE-ICE has been active in forming partnerships over the years but, in response to ongoing negotiations with the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA), THE ICE developed a framework to facilitate decision-making when negotiating new partnerships with peer quality assurance agencies and other bodies.

This framework, which incorporates cost factors, was unanimously adopted by THE-ICE Board at their meeting in July 2021.

### 2.2 Significant governance issues

In November 2020 Ms Christina Aquino, Associate Professor Maria Cecilia Tio Cuison, and Dr John Fong retired from THE-ICE Board, when their terms as Directors came to an end.

Elections held during the 2020 AGM (11<sup>th</sup> November) resulted in the following re-appointment and elections to THE-ICE Board:

Name	Position at time of election	Decision
Mr John Daly	Director of Quality Assurance, Swiss Education Group, Switzerland	Re-elected to the Board
Professor Perry Hobson	Pro-Vice Chancellor of Global Engagement, Sunway University, Malaysia	
Ms Gienke Osinga	Dean, Hotel and Facility Management, Breda University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands	
Associate Professor Scott Richardson	Executive Dean, Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management, Australia	
Dr Lilibeth Aragon	Dean, College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management, Lyceum of the Philippines University, Philippines	Elected to the Board
Dr Atty Gezzez Giezi Granado	Dean, College of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of Santo Tomas, Philippines	
Professor Stephen Pratt	Professor, School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of the South Pacific, Fiji	

On 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020, Associate Professor Simon Pawson, Associate Dean of Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School, Australia, was appointed by the THE-ICE Board to fill the casual vacancy on THE-ICE Board of Directors.

## 3. Accreditation

### 3.1 Assessment Panel meetings

THE-ICE Assessment Panel met virtually on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020. The meeting was attended by the Chair (Professor Brian King) and five other Auditors. Professor Jane Ali-Knight submitted her apologies, and four Auditors were absent. The meeting was also attended by the THE-ICE Executive Team.

Following a review of the considerable amount of accreditation activity in 2019/20, the meeting considered a number of operational issues including the process for appointing Auditors, expanding membership of the Assessment Panel, frequency of meeting and intensity of engagement. During the meeting, it was also unanimously decided that a Deputy Chair of the Assessment Panel should be appointed to ensure an appropriate succession plan was established for the Chair of the Assessment Panel. Following which, and with unanimous support, Professor (FH) Mag. Eva Werner, Hon. Prof. was appointed as the Deputy Chair of the Assessment Panel.

### 3.2 Assessment Panel membership

THE-ICE Assessment Panel currently comprises the Chair, Professor Brian King, Deputy Chair, Professor (FH) Mag. Eva Werner, Hon. Prof. and nine Auditors.

Dr John Fong, President and CEO, JF & Associates Global Consultancy, was appointed as an Auditor to THE-ICE Assessment Panel, effective 11<sup>th</sup> November 2020 following THE-ICE AGM, when Dr Fong's term as a Director on THE-ICE Board ended.

Professor Tom Baum, Professor of Tourism Employment, Strathclyde Business School, University of Strathclyde, Scotland was appointed as an Auditor to THE-ICE Assessment Panel on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Dr Sarah Rawlinson, Head of Centre for Contemporary Hospitality, University of Derby, was appointed as an Auditor to THE-ICE Assessment Panel on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

At the 2020 annual meeting of THE-ICE Assessment Panel (21<sup>st</sup> October) it was agreed that it was necessary and beneficial to introduce standard terms of engagement for all incoming and existing Auditors. Accordingly, THE-ICE Auditor Agreement was circulated to all Auditors for completion. A total of 11 signed agreements were returned, with two Auditors not returning. At a meeting of the Chair and Deputy Chair of THE-ICE Assessment Panel with the CEO of THE-ICE on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2021, it was decided that in order to respect the service of Auditors who were no longer active and had not signed agreements, they would be assigned the title Emeritus Auditor of THE-ICE Assessment Panel. Accordingly, Professor Emeritus Merv Hyde and Associate Professor Dr Stephen J Craig-Smith have been awarded this designation.

### 3.3 Accreditation

A number of significant accreditations and several re-accreditations took place in 2020-21:

- **Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland:** successfully completed accreditation, becoming the first member of THE-ICE in Finland in January 2021.

- **Institut Paul Bocuse, Ecully, France:** successfully completed accreditation, becoming the first member of THE-ICE in France in April 2021.

In addition to the above, four institutions have been approved to proceed with accreditation and are currently progressing through the accreditation process:

- WSG, University of Economy, Poland (scheduled to be formally audited in late November/early December 2021)
- Nankai University, Tianjin, China (audit date still to be determined)
- Van Lang University, Vietnam (audit date still to be determined)
- National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Thailand (audit date still to be determined)

### **3.4 Re-accreditation**

The following members successfully achieved re-accreditation by THE-ICE during the year:

- The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management (EAHM), United Arab Emirates – December 2020
- Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School (BMIHMS), Australia – February 2021
- William Angliss Institute (WAI), Australia – February 2021

## 4. Membership and Networking

### 4.1 Membership overview

- i. New members
  - Institut Paul Bocuse, France
  - Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Finland
- ii. Re-accreditation completed
  - Blue Mountains International Hotel Management School (BMIHMS), Australia
  - William Angliss Institute (WAI), Australia
  - Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management, United Arab Emirates
- iii. Re-accreditation in progress
- iv. Re-accreditation due
  - Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy
  - Lyceum of the Philippines University, Philippines
  - MCI Management Centre Innsbruck, Austria
  - University of Santo Tomas, Philippines
- v. Prospective members
  - National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand
  - Van Lang University, Vietnam
  - University of Economy (WSG), Poland
  - Nankai University, Tianjin, China

### 4.2 Significant changes in membership

- **Stenden Qatar change of partner and name**

Al Faisal Holding in Qatar formerly partnered with NHL Stenden to operate Stenden University Qatar. However, Al Faisal Holding has now entered into a new partnership with University of Derby, and the institution has been renamed Al Rayyan International University College (ARIU). Changes of logo and description have been made to THE-ICE website and it was agreed by THE-ICE Executive Committee (15<sup>th</sup> September 2021) for the transition to be formally addressed through the re-accreditation of the institution, due in April 2022.

### 4.3 National and International Quality Assurance Agencies

In line with enhancing international recognition of THE-ICE as a global quality assurance agency, THE-ICE has actively engaged with other IQAAs through this reporting period:

- **Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA), Philippines**

PACUCOA have put forward a proposal for joint accreditation, which was presented to THE-ICE Executive Committee in December 2020. Whilst it was agreed that there was value in the

collaboration, it was concluded that there were too many loose ends for the proposal to be feasible.

This issue prompted THE-ICE to develop a protocol for the development of a framework for collaboration with national and regional quality assurance agencies (see 2.1 above).

- **Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), Australia**

THE-ICE re-accreditation of William Angliss Institute (WAI), Australia, and their application for accreditation of new Masters programmes provided an opportunity to operationalise the objective of THE-ICE to work collaboratively with TEQSA.

It was agreed with all parties that THE-ICE would undertake the project in two parts, presenting a report for re-accreditation and a separate 'external expert' report evaluating the new Masters programmes, which WAI would then submit to TEQSA.

Whilst it was recognised that the process must meet the needs of both TEQSA and the institution, and that the Auditors were sufficiently equipped and supported, it was intended and hoped that this pilot could create an opportunity for THE-ICE to work with other Australian institutions as independent experts for TEQSA registration.

The pilot process, conducted by two experienced Auditors of THE-ICE Assessment Panel, identified that although TEQSA and THE-ICE's standards are aligned, the report writing processes are quite different, and therefore entailed a significant amount of additional work.

The reports, which were well received by WAI, were subsequently sent to TEQSA for consideration. Ongoing discussions indicate, however, that whilst TEQSA have accepted the report of THE-ICE Auditors as verification in relation to the re-accreditation, they do not consider it sufficient external verification for the accreditation of the Masters programmes. Given this unexpected outcome, THE-ICE has engaged with both TEQSA and WAI to identify areas to address TEQSA's concerns.

- **European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA)**

THE-ICE is an Observer of the ECA and active supporter of the ECA and regularly features in the ECA newsletter. Furthermore, THE-ICE CEO regularly attends ECA meetings and contributes to ECA activities. This support was reflected in THE-ICE CEO, Dr Craig Thompson, being re-appointed to the Financial Committee of the ECA in June 2021.

On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 THE-ICE CEO, Dr Craig Thompson, presented to the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA) members regarding the potential for joint accreditation with THE-ICE.

THE-ICE is exploring the potential for the ECA to screen its activities, in order to (in part) satisfy the important and overdue requirement for external verification. Agreements had been made to conduct the review alongside the IPoE Forum 2020 at Buxton. However, as a consequence of COVID-19 restrictions the IPoE Forum in Buxton, and thus the external review, have been deferred until October 2021.

In addition to obtaining partial external verification of its activities, THE-ICE expects a successful review will provide the evidence required to apply for full membership of ECA. In the longer term, a successful screening of THE-ICE by ECA and full membership will be used as the foundation to explore the potential for THE-ICE to undergo a full external review with the objective of entering the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

- **International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)**  
THE-ICE is a long-standing member and supporter of INQAAHE and regularly makes contributions to the INQAAHE newsletter. As the INQAAHE Forum 2021 was a virtual event, it was not possible for representatives of THE-ICE to attend and network as normal, but THE-ICE CEO did engage with the Forum and General Assembly.

Furthermore, INQAAHE recently announced significant changes in governance and the creation of a permanent secretariat in Barcelona which suggests it may be appropriate for THE-ICE to more actively engage with INQAAHE.

- **Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT)**  
HEEACT is not a government agency but has been appointed by the government to make accreditation decisions and to develop a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for Taiwan. Through intensive and persistent negotiation, THE-ICE has developed a burgeoning relationship with HEEACT that has three key objectives:
  - Creation of a research paper addressing how government and non-government agencies work to improve international education through quality assurance and accreditation.
  - Joint accreditation through mutual recognition of standards, which would gain more members for THE-ICE in Taiwan.
  - HEEACT engaging THE-ICE Auditors as consultants to assist in the development of the NQF and assisting their institutions to meet international standards.

The relationship resulted in a two day (7<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021) online seminar involving a number of representatives from each organisation and subsequently a request for a representative of HEEACT to join THE-ICE Assessment Panel meeting in October 2021.

#### 4.4 Partnerships and Alliances

In line with THE-ICE ethos of collaboration, the need and benefit of which has been intensified by the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, THE-ICE has actively sought to develop partnerships and alliances throughout this reporting period:

- **UK NARIC**  
UK NARIC is the United Kingdom's National Recognition Information Centre, and as such is responsible for providing information and expert opinion on academic, vocational, and professional qualifications from across the world. THE-ICE signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UK NARIC in September 2020 with the objective to pursue mutual understanding of processes, exchange information and expertise, and collaborate for the benefit of both parties. Through the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding, UK NARIC and THE-ICE committed to explore possibilities for mutual collaboration in the areas of accreditation, quality enhancement, and recognition, building a strategic partnership that facilitates and promotes cooperation in accreditation and benchmarking activities and paves the way for combining accreditation procedures.  
  
These objectives were realised in the creation of an extensive proposal for members of THE-ICE (Supporting International Understanding and Recognition of THE-ICE members' Qualifications), which was circulated to THE-ICE network in January 2021.
- **Unibuddy**  
Unibuddy, a student recruitment platform, aims to empower students to make better decisions regarding higher education through shared human experience. They provide powerful student engagement tools for admissions, recruitment and enrolment

professionals, to match prospects with student ambassadors, host virtual events and gain actionable insights and analytics on prospective students. Through a partnership agreement, launched in May 2021, members of THE-ICE can leverage the Unibuddy platform to connect prospective students with current students, and connect with them throughout their admissions journey. Through this partnership, members of THE-ICE are eligible for a 20% discount on the Unibuddy platform.

- **Hosco**

In September 2020 THE-ICE launched a partnership with Hosco designed to collect and provide accurate data related to alumni employability for its member institutions. This information will allow members to validate their quality through confirmation of the opportunities and career paths their programmes lead to, detailing the placement success of their students and graduates, which will help THE-ICE members more effectively position themselves in the increasingly competitive higher education landscape.

In addition to tracking and benchmarking for institutions, students and alumni of THE-ICE member institutions have access to Hosco's global community to make connections, find jobs, and stay inspired in pursuing a career in hospitality, supporting them to further expand their international placement and employment opportunities.

The timing of the agreement did not permit the reporting of alumni data in 2020, but from 2021 onwards a Hosco annual alumni report will be delivered to each institution alongside the ISBSB reports.

## **5. Promotion of Excellence**

### **5.1 THE-ICE Webinar Series**

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic THE-ICE offered a second round of webinars each month through 2021 to provide members with an opportunity to connect, support each other and share good practice. A total of six (6) webinars were hosted between March and October 2021.

The webinars (at the peak) attracted more than 70 attendees, from 30 institutions in 16 countries, with 75% of respondents indicating they would be likely to recommend THE-ICE Webinar Series to colleagues.

### **5.2 International Panel of Experts (IPoE) Forum**

The VIPoE Forum 2020 (26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> October) was the first, and hopefully the only, IPoE Forum offered entirely in virtual format. Given the proliferation of virtual events offered during this period the VIPoE comprised of just two panels. The first comprised three industry speakers who presented an industry perspective on 'The new normal hospitality and tourism landscape', whilst the second panel comprised input from three academics providing insight into 'TH&E Education in the Post-pandemic Era – Strategies for Survival and Growth'. The VIPoE also included presentations from three of the Business Alliance Partners of THE-ICE.

THE-ICE 14<sup>th</sup> IPoE Forum 2021 will be hosted by University of Derby (UoD), at their campus in Buxton, England, from October 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> 2021, with the majority of the programme also being offered in virtual format. The 14<sup>th</sup> IPoE Forum 2021, which focuses on 'Securing Our Future – exploring sustainability in and of TH&E Education', has assumed a new and deeper relevance in the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, the 14<sup>th</sup> IPoE Forum 2021 sees a return to the more traditional format, with five panel sessions over two days and presentations by all Business Alliance Partners scheduled. The Roundtable Workshop Series (RWS) is incorporated into day two of the event and includes a presentation of the research undertaken by the recipients of the Research Grant Scheme (RGS) 2021.

### **5.3 Research Grant Scheme (RGS)**

The RGS was introduced by THE-ICE in 2019 to meet our objective of promoting and developing excellence, quality and scholarly activity.

The RGS 2021 was announced on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and attracted twice as many applications as in 2019. The RGS Evaluation Panel selected two recipients; a proposal from Saxion University of Applied Sciences, The Netherlands; and a joint proposal from Stenden Qatar University of Applied Sciences, Qatar, and Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management, United Arab Emirates. A third application, also from Saxion, had proposed a similar line of research to the latter, regarding alternative forms of internship, and THE-ICE successfully connected the researchers from Stenden Qatar and EAHM with these Saxion researchers, making the project even more collaborative.

The research projects and available results will be presented in the Roundtable Workshop Series during the 14<sup>th</sup> IPoE Forum 2021.

## 5.4 THE-ICE Awards

- **Fellow of THE-ICE Award**

Whilst a number of nominations were made for the award of Fellow of THE-ICE in 2021, the Board considered that the nominees were not able to currently offer the level of academic achievement or scholarship required of a Fellow. Accordingly, no fellowships will be awarded in 2021.

Furthermore, THE-ICE Board considers that in view of this outcome it is appropriate and necessary to revise the procedure for generating nominees for Fellowship. The Chair will deliver a proposal for a revised procedure before the end of the year.

- **THE-ICE Hall of Fame**

No nominations for THE-ICE Hall of Fame were received in 2021.

## 6. Benchmarking and Quality Enhancement

### 6.1 International Student Barometer and Student Barometer (ISBSB) Survey

Due to the aberrant conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic, THE-ICE did not award rankings in 2021.

i-graduate rolled out the InTouch online platform in 2021, enabling institutions to personalise their survey directly and to immediately access response rates. As in 2020, all participating members will receive raw data and open comments as standard. In the reporting additional deliverables were negotiated under the new three-year contract with i-graduate.

Despite experiencing a few minor technical challenges associated with the new portal, the overall response rate was 33.8% for THE-ICE member institutions in 2021 and of 25 institutions who participated, only 9 returned a response rate below 15%.

### 6.2 360° Quality Evaluation

THE-ICE was initially created as a quality assurance agency and operated in much the same manner as all other agencies, with experts conducting an evaluation of an institution, based on the evidence provided in a self evaluation report and, if successful, awarding accreditation for a period of 5 years. As such, quality was viewed through the 'lens' of external experts alone.

The agreement with i-graduate changed the entire operation and ethos of THE-ICE, by providing a second 'lens' on the quality of members, based on student satisfaction, gathered through the ISBSB. Furthermore, since the ISBSB was conducted annually, THE-ICE was able to provide detailed feedback to institutions each year, which was comparable with performance in previous years.

The 2020 annual report explained that THE-ICE had refined the delivery of ISBSB feedback in order to:

- present streamlined and tailored results to each institution
- link the results from one year to those of preceding and subsequent years
- ensure results are the basis of specific actions with each institution aimed at quality enhancement
- link the performance of institutions as reflected in the ISBSB to their subsequent re-accreditation.

Furthermore, it was stated that each institution would be expected to develop action plans to address their performance against each criterion in the following year, in the knowledge that the performance of each institution against the selected and overall criteria will be reported as part of the subsequent re-accreditation process.

In this way, THE-ICE aims to stimulate members to adopt THE-ICE Quality Enhancement Cycle, in both their preparations for and participation in the ISBSB and their preparations for (re)accreditations. This approach is central to the stated objective of THE-ICE to shift its emphasis from quality assurance to quality enhancement.

The partnership with Hosco enables THE-ICE to further develop this process, since it provides a critical third lens on quality, from the perspective of alumni. Although the process is new with an evaluation of the situation in 2021, the reports produced in subsequent years will provide comparable time series data, which can be used to develop performance indicators.

THE-ICE will use the ISBSB and Hosco reports, alongside the reports produced by the experts of THE-ICE Assessment Panel, to provide members with a more robust and usable perspective on their

quality. Furthermore, the detailed annual feedback will enable institutions to clearly and precisely identify areas of excellence (to develop and promote) and areas of weakness/concern (to monitor and address).

In the future, THE-ICE will aim to develop further initiatives designed to provide institutions with other lenses on their quality and performance, working towards a unique 360° evaluation of quality.

## 7. Financial report

The financial statements of THE-ICE for the financial year ended 30 June 2021 will be presented to the Members for approval at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

Although a break-even budget was approved by the Board for the 2020/21 financial period, THE-ICE achieved a surplus of \$66,443 due to a confluence of favourable events during the year primarily driven by:

- Consistent revenue year-on-year due to good membership retention
- \$58,780 received in COVID-19 support from the Australian government
- Lower than expected expenses driven by the inability for staff to travel or attend conferences during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Careful financial management by the Executive Team.

These “additional” funds enabled the THE-ICE to enter into a new arrangement with Hosco for the benefit of members. Furthermore, it has allowed THE-ICE to keep membership fees for 2021/2022 at the same level as the last few years, ensuring there is no increased financial burden on members during these challenging times.

The Board has approved a budget for the 2021/22 financial year forecasting a modest loss to ensure that member benefits continue to be enhanced.

I am pleased to report that THE-ICE remains in a strong financial position with a healthy cash balance and is able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.



**Professor Peter Ryan**  
**Director and Treasurer**  
**THE-ICE Board**