The Bader International Study Centre

Faculty Handbook

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Welcome to the BISC

The Bader International Study Centre (BISC), located at Herstmonceux Castle in East Sussex, England, represents a fusion of history and innovation. The setting may be an idyllic 15th century castle, but our focus is on developing students who are prepared to lead in the 21st century. The BISC is part of Queen’s University, Canada, and enables Queen’s students to take their first year of undergraduate study as a study abroad experience. In addition, the BISC offers a range of upper year programs which are open both to Queen’s students and to students from other partner universities. Although the student body is predominantly North American, there are many other nationalities on site, including Chinese, Korean and Japanese. Small class sizes, integrated hands-on learning opportunities, primary research-based projects, and a diverse faculty and student population set the foundation for innovative global learning. This handbook is provided to instructors to outline the academic culture and the practical realities of working and/or living at the BISC. Hopefully, this handbook will make the first few weeks a little easier for any new instructors joining the BISC!

Academic Programs

- Fall Term: September-December (12 weeks + 2 exam weeks)
- Winter Term: January-April (12 weeks + 2 exam weeks)
- Summer Term: May/June (6 weeks. No exam period)

The BISC sessional dates can be accessed here:
http://www.queensu.ca/registrar/resources/sessional-dates

(Click on the appropriate academic year and locate “Bader International Study Centre”).

First Year Program

The BISC First-Year program runs from September until April and hosts the majority of students at the BISC. Students are enrolled in one of three streams: Humanities, Sciences, or Concurrent-Education. Each term, they take five courses to suit their academic stream.

Details of the first year programs can be seen here:
https://www.queensu.ca/bisc/academics/first-year-program

All students at the BISC are fully registered with Queen’s and, as such, the BISC complies with Queen’s academic policies and regulations. Students use the same online portals and have access to the same digital resources as their peers back in Canada. At the end of each term, grades are sent back to Queen’s. After successful completion of their first year, BISC students transfer to main campus in Kingston, Ontario.
Upper Year Program

Upper year students tend to stay for only one term (Fall, Winter, or Summer – it should be noted that while the Summer Term (Summer+) is only 6 weeks long, it delivers full-length courses in a contracted variant that is research-intensive. This is an excellent opportunity for students not just to experience an international education but to also gain disciplinary credits and/or take elective courses that they might not otherwise have had the opportunity to take).

Upper-year opportunities are available to those students who have completed at least one year of university. Course offerings are international in scope and interdisciplinary in nature; see here: https://www.queensu.ca/bisc/academics/upper-year-program

Experiential and Active Learning

The Experiential Learning Program is based on the value and importance of experiential and active learning to student pedagogy both inside and outside the classroom. Experiential learning opportunities (including, e.g. field studies) are an integrated element of the BISC’s programs. The combination of classroom discussion and experiential learning reflects our emphasis on anchoring the academic experience in direct observation and participation. All instructors submit EL proposals before the start of the upcoming term (a form is sent out to solicit proposals). Activities outside the classroom run Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Activities may make use of London sites during the mid-term week when all students are in London and each course should have at least one local or virtual opportunity for EL. New instructors are encouraged to discuss ELO options with the Experiential Learning Manager as soon as possible following their appointment.

Note that instructors may travel to off-site activities on the coach with their students (departure from the Castle), but no financial compensation can be given for alternative travel arrangements. There is a lunch allowance of £10 per day against receipts.

Course structure

6.0 unit “full year” courses run across Fall and Winter Terms (September to April)
3.0 unit courses run within a given term (Fall, Winter, or Summer)

For each course, there is the following time commitment per term:

- Run two teaching sessions per week (usually 1hr20min per session)
- Organise and attend one or two EL activities per term
- Hold weekly office hours as per contract so that students may approach instructors without requiring an appointment. Office hours can be held remotely using Microsoft TEAMS.
Instructors are responsible for their course administration, including assessment*, exam proctoring, and paperwork* relating to the course:
- Development and submission of course syllabus using the BISC digital syllabus template*
- EL proposal form
- Maintenance of the Virtual Learning Environment (onQ)
- Reading lists
- Assignment guidelines, including grading rubrics
- Assignment feedback and grades released via onQ within 14 working days of the assignment submission
- Exam proctoring and assessment
- Confirmation of final grades after the end of term
- There may occasionally be other duties associated with a course; e.g. in cases of plagiarism faculty need to follow the formal Queen’s Academic Integrity procedure; see here: http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/students-at-queens/academic-integrity

*Guidance for course preparation, including the syllabus template and BISC policies and procedures can be found here: https://www.queensu.ca/bisc/faculty-home/teaching-resources/course-administration and here: https://www.queensu.ca/bisc/about-us/policies. In particular, please pay attention to the assignment submission and extenuating circumstances guidelines as these differ significantly from other universities. Do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Academic Director for help.

**Working at the BISC**

**First day at the BISC**

Each term, the teaching begins on a Monday; however, it should be noted that there is a briefing meeting in the weeks before term start. It is advised that all instructors attend, either in person or virtually.

Before arriving at the BISC, newly appointed instructors will be contacted to arrange a meet and greet for their arrival at the Castle. Once on site, they will be given a brief tour of the Castle and the teaching spaces, shown their office space, and introduced to any academic and no-academic staff on the premises.

Prior to term start, usually on Sunday afternoon, there is an opening ceremony where instructors have a chance to meet their students. Queen’s students can freely add and drop courses during the first two weeks of term, so many students will use this opportunity to meet instructors and make enrolment decisions. Some instructors may opt to stay overnight following the opening ceremony, as this can finish quite late. There is a reasonable faculty
rate for occasional accommodation, which can be booked by contacting the Bader Hall Reception.

**Admin Office**

**Administration Office Manager & Human Resources Coordinator: Nicola Taylor**

The Office Manager oversees the Admin Office and is instrumental in keeping track of the administrative responsibilities of instructors. In addition, as HR Coordinator, Nicola is the first contact for any HR questions or concerns, carries out the HR aspects of new instructor inductions, DBS checks, and keeps personnel records.

**Academic Administrator: Dr Jennifer Winter**

The Academic Administrator runs the academic aspects of the Admin Office: managing student enrolment and transcripts, building the academic timetable, supporting the Academic Advisors, and assisting the Deputy Academic Director with all matters including academic quality monitoring.

**Assistant to the Vice Provost & Executive Director: Natalie Morphew**

The Assistant to the Vice Provost & Executive Director provides administrative support to the Vice Provost & Executive Director and manages diary appointments for the Academic Director.

**Administrative Facilities for Instructors**

A guideline of detailed Administrative Services is distributed at the start of each term. Here is a brief overview of the most commonly requested services.

**Office space:** Instructors are assigned a workspace, usually in a shared office. Each office has an allocated telephone extension, and a computer can be made available by the Computer Support Manager.

**Photocopying/printing:** Instructors are responsible for their own photocopying and there are two photocopier/printers available. Printers are automatically installed on BISC-owned devices; however, it is possible to connect these to personal devices. Contact the BISC IT Helpdesk for assistance.

**Teaching spaces:** There are several different teaching spaces available at the Castle, with a range of lower and higher technologies. Please discuss your teaching requirements with the Deputy Academic Director so that we can try to assign you to the most suitable room for your class.

**Room bookings:** Please email the Assistant to the Vice Provost & Executive Director to request function and seminar room bookings.
**Castle Community**

The BISC prides itself on providing, despite its small size, a vibrant academic and intellectual community environment. This is made possible by the ongoing engagement of its academic and non-academic staff. Here is just a small insight into some of the community activities offered at the BISC:

- Research talks by instructors and guest speakers from other institutions. These talks are open to the whole Castle Community and are an important part of showcasing research at the BISC.
- The BISC musicians in residence offer a variety of activities and events each term (choir [bass and tenors always in high demand!] and other vocal ensembles, joint choral performances with other institutions, student/faculty performances at the Castle or at other venues, etc.). Instructors are heartily invited to join in!
- A variety of sporting activities, such as football, intramurals, etc. These will vary each term.
- Finally, at the end of every term, there is a ceremony to celebrate the conclusion of another successful term. Instructors are encouraged to attend. The celebrations include dinner followed by performances by instructors and students.

**Code of Conduct**

Please note that there is an employee handbook with details of the expected code of conduct of all individuals employed by the BISC. This can be accessed via the internal website or obtained from the Admin Office. It is the responsibility of all employees to read this at their earliest opportunity.

**Faculty Professional Development**

Each academic year, the BISC organises a range of opportunities for professional development, supported by the Centre for Teaching and Learning on the Queen’s main campus as well as subject experts at the BISC. Professional development opportunities include, but are not limited to best practice roundtables, pedagogical workshops, and support sessions. To supplement these offerings, there is a rich online archive of resources from past initiatives (2012-present) available in the faculty area of the BISC website: [http://queensu.ca/bisc/faculty](http://queensu.ca/bisc/faculty) along with a schedule of each term’s workshops and roundtables. There is also a multi-unit online module addressing the unique nature of teaching and learning at the BISC for instructors interested in self-directed pedagogical development available via onQ.

**Living and/or eating at the BISC**
Please see the Assistant Finance Manager to discuss full or part-residential arrangements. For non-residential faculty, tickets for dining room meals can be purchased on site. A kitchenette is also available in the Castle in the Common Room in Apartment One.

**Financial Matters and Pensions**

The Assistant Finance Manager is responsible for paying instructors and deducting any Pension and National Insurance contributions. For new instructors to be paid promptly at the end of their first month of working at the BISC, they should contact the Assistant Finance Manager as quickly as possible after arrival (or prior to arrival via e-mail). Faculty salaries are paid on the 25th of each month (or nearest working day to that date.)

The BISC is part of the government NEST auto-enrolment pension scheme. Automatic enrolment is triggered when the annual salary hits £10,000. When this occurs, the pension provider will contact new instructors directly with full details. For more information about the UK government mandatory enrolment scheme, see here: [http://www.nestpensions.org.uk](http://www.nestpensions.org.uk)

**IT Services and Computer Support**

Newly appointed instructors will be issued with a BISC IT account. This allows them to log into any computer on the network and any computer services, to access their BISC e-mail service, and to connect their own devices to the Wi-Fi.

Instructors will also be provided with a Queen’s University Net ID which will give them access to all the online resources and databases available to the Queen’s campus community. This is also needed to log into onQ, which is fully hosted and supported by Queen’s.

For any tech support, including office computer issues, audio visual needs, teleconferencing, etc., please contact the BISC IT helpdesk on biscit@queensu.ac.uk.

**Library**

The role of BISC library is to support teaching, learning and research. Instructors can contact the Librarian regarding all aspects of textbooks, reading materials, and other information sources for their course, and regarding any information relating to onQ and copyright questions.

The library holds a copy of any book that is required or additional reading on any course, so please make sure the library receives a copy of your syllabus or reading list with as much notice as possible before the start of term. The library’s current holdings can be viewed on the Library Catalogue at [http://bisclibrary.queensu.ac.uk:8080](http://bisclibrary.queensu.ac.uk:8080), but the Library team will happily check your reading lists against current holdings.
In addition to the print collection, instructors have access to Queen’s University Library’s extensive collection of online books, journals, and databases. This can be accessed here: http://library.queensu.ca (using the Queen’s Net ID). For more information about searching and accessing the online resources, please contact the Librarian.

For more information about the services provided by the BISC library provides please visit: https://www.queensu.ca/bisc/current-students/academic-support/library-service.

**Student Services**

Student Services is a professional department which provides the best student experience. If instructors ever have any concerns about the academic progress and/or welfare of a student, they should contact the Deputy Academic Director and the Student Services and Enrolment Manager to share those concerns. Student Services also employ a Student Success Coordinator, who provides academic support.

**Timeline of Teaching at the BISC**

Following the appointment of new instructors, they should have the following experience:

- Receive contract and faculty handbook
- Receive at their current e-mail address a BISC username/password. From then on, all correspondence will be sent to the BISC address
- The following communications will be received:
  - A welcome e-mail to arrange a meet and greet at the Castle
  - A welcome e-mail from the Academic Director with the key sessional dates and other related information
  - A welcome e-mail from the Educational Standards Committee d an outline of pedagogical expectations. A deadline for the return of the syllabus should be given
  - A welcome e-mail from the EL Manager with the EL proposal form
  - A welcome e-mail from the Library and bookstore to ask for a copy of the course reading list, required textbooks, etc.

This amount of information can seem overwhelming, so new instructors should not hesitate to contact the Deputy Academic Director for guidance.

Teaching starts! Here are some considerations & reminders:

- Familiarity with Arts & Science Academic Regulations and procedures is the responsibility of all instructors
- Attendance should be taken and recorded in onQ for all classes
- Instructors should go through the syllabus with their students, so that there is clarity in the expectations and availability of resources for the course
The term runs with two teaching sessions (lectures or seminars, depending on the course) per course per week + office hours in which the students can freely approach faculty without needing to make an appointment.

Supervising ELOs is part of the teaching expectation.

Grading assignments: the first assessment of each course should take place before week 6. This is an important introductory exercise so that students gain an understanding of their academic potential. First year students are usually genuinely disappointed by their grades in comparison to their previous high school marks. Please refer to the BISC assessment documents if you are unfamiliar with the Queen’s grading scale.

Maintaining accurate record of grades in Gradebook.

Supervising exams.

Grading exams and returning all grades via onQ.

The Academic Director or Deputy Academic Director will observe new instructors teaching and will provide prior notice of this and constructive feedback afterwards.

Committees at the BISC

There are three main faculty committees that new instructors are likely to interact with:

Educational Standards Committee

The BISC Educational Standards Committee provides broad curricular oversight across the courses and field schools offered at the BISC. The Committee reviews the academic content of courses comparative to equivalent offerings at Queen’s, oversees the usage of the BISC VLE (onQ), reports directly to the Quality Assurance Agency during inspections, and is part of the process (alongside both the departmental and the Faculty of Arts and Science Curriculum Committees) of considering proposals for course offerings at the BISC. The full Terms of Reference of this Committee are available from the Deputy Academic Director.

The purpose of the BISC Educational Standards Committee is:

- To assure pedagogical and academic quality across all BISC offerings, maintaining a standardised presentation of information, with transparent learning objectives, course expectations, and assessments.
- To ensure that all instructors remain actively engaged with this quality enhancement process, through continuing oversight of the academic designs, and long-term strategic academic planning.

The Educational Standards Committee is chaired by the Deputy Academic Director. Its membership includes instructors and, when possible, a student representative (usually a BISC alumnus who joins remotely).
In addition to their course syllabus, all instructors are expected to maintain a VLE for their course.

In the case of new instructors joining the BISC after the call for syllabi, the Committee is able to communicate with that member of faculty on a one-to-one basis. In addition, the Committee is always happy to provide assistance to new faculty who are writing a BISC syllabus and/or VLE page for the first time. To contact the Committee please use curriculum@bisc.queensu.ac.uk.

Please note that the BISC uses a standardised syllabus template for all courses, and no other format of syllabus or course outline may be distributed to students.

**Experiential Learning Committee**

The Experiential Learning Committee is primarily a communications body whose task is to report to the Academic Director of the BISC regarding any concerns or issues that relate to off-site study at the BISC, including but not limited to Experiential Learning Opportunities (ELOs), the Mid Term trip. The EL committee is designed to, in conjunction with the Experiential Learning Office, ensure appropriate academic merit in all ELOs and to ensure compliance with the institution’s code of best practice for experiential learning. Further the EL committee has a responsibility to develop scholarship in the field of Experiential Learning and to publicize the quality and excellence of experiential learning at the BISC and Queen’s University. The Experiential Learning committee also has a role of communication where it provides to the Academic Director information and insight into the current and continuing ELOs and provides to the Academic Director recommendations on actions which may need to be resolved.

The EL Committee is chaired by faculty and its membership is comprised of faculty, EL Office staff, and student representatives.

**Research Committee**

The BISC Research Committee exists to promote and publicise research output, both within the BISC community and also back at Queen’s University’s main campus in Kingston, ON. It oversees and regularly updates the research-focused content on the BISC website, ensuring that the public face of the BISC reflects the intellectual life of the institution, and liaises with the academic departments at the Kingston campus to promote both student and faculty research output. The Research Committee also organises a bi-annual conference to showcase student and faculty research being conducted on site.

The Research Committee membership is comprised entirely of faculty. The Research Committee usually meets at least twice a term (more frequently if larger projects require a greater degree of input) and reports to the Academic Director.
**Useful Contacts**

Here is a list of contact e-mails for positions mentioned in this document that may be useful to new faculty both before and after arriving at the BISC.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vice-Provost and Executive Director (BISC)</td>
<td>Dr. Hugh Horton</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vped@bisc.queensu.ac.uk">vped@bisc.queensu.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Director</td>
<td>Dr. Christian Lloyd</td>
<td><a href="mailto:adirector@bisc.queensu.ac.uk">adirector@bisc.queensu.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Academic Director</td>
<td>Dr. Anna Taylor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:deputyad@bisc.queensu.ac.uk">deputyad@bisc.queensu.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential Learning Manager</td>
<td>Dr. Ruth Cereceda</td>
<td><a href="mailto:r_cereceda@bisc.queensu.ac.uk">r_cereceda@bisc.queensu.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Success and Learning Development Coordinator</td>
<td>Dr. Isabelle Brent</td>
<td><a href="mailto:i_brent@bisc.queensu.ac.uk">i_brent@bisc.queensu.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Administrator</td>
<td>Dr. Jennifer Winter</td>
<td><a href="mailto:j_winter@bisc.queensu.ac.uk">j_winter@bisc.queensu.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin Office Manager</td>
<td>Nicola Taylor</td>
<td><a href="mailto:n_taylor@bisc.queensu.ac.uk">n_taylor@bisc.queensu.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Support</td>
<td>BISC “IT”</td>
<td><a href="mailto:biscit@bisc.queensu.ac.uk">biscit@bisc.queensu.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and student accommodation*</td>
<td>Bader Hall Reception</td>
<td><a href="mailto:accom@bisc.queensu.ac.uk">accom@bisc.queensu.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>Sarah Butler</td>
<td><a href="mailto:library@bisc.queensu.ac.uk">library@bisc.queensu.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Student Services and Enrolment</td>
<td>Interim: Dr. Jennifer Medves</td>
<td><a href="mailto:studentsservices@bisc.queensu.ac.uk">studentsservices@bisc.queensu.ac.uk</a></td>
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