



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Independent Higher Education)

INSTITUTION: Ikh Zasag International University

ADDRESS: Bayanzurkh District, 4 Khoroo
B Dorjin Street
PO Box 349
Ulaan Baatar 13381
Mongolia

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Dr Namsrai Nyam-Osor

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 2 September 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: 28 November 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Ikh Zasag International University (the Institution/the University) was founded in 1994 and is a private institution based in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city of Mongolia. It offers bachelor's and master's degrees and doctorates. It is located on two campuses and ten branch schools. One campus is in the centre of the city and the second campus is located about ten kilometres from the main one and was established in 2000.

The Institution is a registered private limited company in Mongolia. Its mission is to bring knowledge within reach, through education and research, to enrich and develop the future of students, communities, industry and society. Its aim is to become a modern global institution using technology and innovation, to define ways for positive change nationwide. Its objectives are to develop progressive teaching methods using effective technology enabling students and graduates to use their knowledge, abilities and talents to the full for the benefit of the people of Mongolia and to undertake wider international research.

The Institution has one sole director. The most senior position in the Institution's executive structure is its President. A member of the Mongolian Parliament chairs the Governing Board and is the person to whom the President reports.

The Institution has continued to develop and expand since its inception and now has a variety of partnership arrangements with numerous overseas organisations in Europe, Asia, Australia and the United States of America (USA).

2. Brief description of the current provision

There are currently seven branch schools offering bachelor degree programmes and one school offering master's programmes and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) studies. In September 2016, the Institution commenced the delivery of a medical degree programme. An innovation centre provides students with the opportunity to implement their knowledge and enables them to obtain practical hands-on experience to complement their academic studies.

There are many undergraduate courses offered at the Institution. These can be categorised under the subject headings of law, accounting and finance, economics, banking, business and management, information technology, international relations, hotel and catering, tourism, marketing, human resources, construction, engineering, medicine, dentistry and public health, foreign languages, art and design, history, film and television.

Postgraduate master's courses are offered in business administration, accounting and finance, tourism, marketing, human resources and law and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students are recruited in the subject areas of law and history.

The Institution is accredited until 2023 by the National Council on Higher Educational Accreditation which is the major Mongolian accreditation body. All programmes must be approved by the Ministry of Education before they are permitted to run. The Institution continues to be monitored each year by the Ministry.

At the time of the inspection, there were 6,078 students, 5,747 full-time and 331 part-time, studying or enrolled to study on 28 courses, including 99 students under 18 years of age. The majority of students are female. Most students are of Mongolian origin, but some are recruited from China, Russia, Korea and Kazakhstan.

Enrolments to the Institution take place each autumn and traditional delivery methods are employed. The Institution does not offer online delivery at present although the Graduate School will do so in the future. The entry requirements are clearly set by the Mongolian Ministry of Education and the Institution follows these requirements.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector in one day. Meetings were held with the Head of the Institution and other senior academic staff, teaching staff and students. There were no teaching observations carried out as the inspection took place on the first day of the new academic year and no teaching was scheduled for that day. The inspector was invited to attend the traditional short ceremony marking the start of the new academic year. The inspector was able to observe part of the induction process. A new seven story building adjoining the second campus offering Finance and Economics courses was inspected. Various documentation was scrutinised. The staff cooperated fully with the inspection.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	22-25 September 2014
Interim	13 October 2016
Re-accreditation	6-8 November 2017

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

A new seven story Finance and Economics School, adjoining the second campus, was opened in 2018. This building was purpose built for the delivery of teaching and learning.

2. Response to actions points in last report

There were no action points in the last report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that the Institution establishes a formalised action plan process to provide evidence of the response of various committees to recommendations made by external bodies.

A suitable action plan has been developed, providing evidence of the response of various committees to recommendations made by external bodies.

The Institution should provide a brief summary or index of documentation held by the Institution in English as well as in the Mongolian language.

A brief index of documentation held by the Institution in the English language has been developed.

The Institution is recommended to edit inconsistencies in role and committee titles in the documentation provided in English.

The documentation has now been checked, edited and inconsistencies in role and committee titles have been eradicated.

The Institution should localise the classroom observation form to the Institution and make provision for it to be signed by both the observer and the academic staff member being observed along with space to record any proposed action.

The classroom observation form now relates appropriately to the Institution and makes provision for the signatures of both the observer and the academic staff member being observed. It also provides space for an indication of future action to be taken to develop the teaching skills of the observed staff member. The completed observation forms were of an appropriate standard.

It is recommended that the Institution makes provision for the staff induction checklist to be signed by the member of staff as well as the hiring manager.

The staff induction checklist is now signed by the staff member as well as the hiring manager.

The Institution should develop a research strategy based on building centres of excellence or expertise perhaps in collaboration with other institutions or partners.

A relevant policy, adopted by the University Council on 10 September 2018, provides for a research strategy based on creating centres of excellence. The strategy document contains appropriate and relevant objectives to ensure the strategy is effective.

It is recommended that the Institution increases the recruitment of academic staff possessing a strong research base.

The Institution now has 35 members of staff holding doctorates, three of whom have been appointed since the last inspection. In collaboration with another local university, a joint dissertation committee has been established and two doctorate candidates successfully defended their theses in 2018.

The Institution should establish a designated careers advice service.

A dedicated careers advisory service has been established in both campuses.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Governance, Strategy and Financial Management (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Institution carries out risk management planning effectively and performs a risk assessment exercise on a twice-yearly basis. Its main risks are perceived to come from competition. This risk is addressed by ensuring that the curriculum remains current and that the Institution provides continuous support to its student body to enable them to achieve their goals.

One of the major risks faced by the Institution is presented by the increase in inflation within the national economy. This risk is mitigated by the diversification of business activities by the parent company as the opportunity to increase student fees is limited.

In addition, the Institution is committed to carrying out a social service in the community by supporting parents of children with special needs by the provision of a day centre near to its second campus. As a result, the Institution is highly regarded in the community and is recognised by government for its beneficial impact through developing students academically and encouraging them to become socially aware citizens.

Performance measurement is carried out at all levels within the Institution. At the staff level, there is an annual performance appraisal undertaken. At the institution level, programme performance is monitored and reported on annually enabling the Institution to compare outcomes with its operational targets which are set by reference to its strategic plan. The rigorous performance appraisal mechanism is considered by the Institution to be essential to maintain a high level of quality provision.

The Institution has not produced an action plan or procedure for dealing with an unforeseen major incident. This renders it potentially liable to adverse publicity if such an unforeseen event occurs.

4.2 Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

An online national student administration system has been developed and enables swifter extraction of individual data, including outcomes of student satisfaction surveys, which in turn facilitates efficiency in administration. Students are able to download teaching material from the system and confirmed that they found the administration of the Institution through the use of the system to be effective and efficient. Data is stored electronically.

Classroom observations take place and evidence was seen of completed reviews signed by both the observer and the lecturer being observed. The effect of the classroom observation is to ensure that teaching delivery remains effective and is underpinned by a commonly held goal of continuous improvement. The classroom

observation methods employed also enable the identification of the need for teacher development to take place, particularly relating to newly appointed academic staff. This helps to ensure that the overall threats posed by competitors are addressed appropriately.

Staff appraisals are carried out on an annual basis and consider achievements over the previous year and look forward by establishing goals for the following year. This applies to all staff and forms part of the staff development process. Academic staff fully supported the staff appraisal system, including classroom observations, in operation and believe that it helps them to concentrate their efforts on self-improvement and on the provision of effective teaching delivery.

Continuing emphasis is placed on research and scholarly activity and staff are actively encouraged to develop their research profiles. This is in accordance with the mission and vision of the Institution. Sound research is carried out, often in collaboration with other institutions both locally and internationally. Academic staff confirmed that they are effectively supported to carry out their research, including attendance at conferences in foreign locations, which in turn impacts positively on teaching delivery.

4.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Part of the Institution's mission is to enrich and develop the future of students to enable them to take a constructive place in their community, industry and society. To this end, the Institution engages in encouraging students to develop their knowledge and talents, to act on their own initiative and become lifelong learners. Teaching methods employed encourage and facilitate independent learning through curricula which require students to engage in their own research and timetable allowance is made to facilitate this.

Programmes are subject to periodic review which involves external input from academics and industry under the supervision of the National Accreditation Council which operates on behalf of the Ministry of Education. The learning outcomes are publicly available and assessments are geared to their achievement and subject to review through the annual performance appraisal activity. The assessment strategy and methodology are reviewed by taking account of the feedback received from academic staff and students and the outcomes achieved. This helps to ensure that assessment is relevant and sufficiently rigorous to meet the intended learning outcomes.

Academic staff review programme materials to ensure that they remain current. This, together with keeping the assessment strategy and methodology relevant, ties in with the need for the Institution to address its main threat from competition. The impact of this is that the graduates are keenly sought after by employers for their level of practical knowledge and skills.

4.4 Student Recruitment, Support, Guidance and Progression (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

A thorough induction process is applied by the Institution. Students interviewed praised the induction and stated that they found it to be helpful.

The online student information system enables administrative and academic staff to review individual student performance speedily and to take remedial action where necessary. Students, who are found not to be making the expected level of progress, receive academic counselling in the first instance. If the student's performance is affected by non-academic issues, they receive guidance through the student counselling process. Students say that this is very helpful and provides a robust support mechanism

Data on attendance and punctuality is recorded in the online student information system and enables action to be taken with regard to any absences quickly. The administrative staff demonstrate that they are ably assisted by technology to perform their tasks in a highly efficient manner.

4.5 Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The new seven story Finance and Economics School, adjoining the second campus, is purpose built and suitable for the delivery of effective teaching and learning.

The library stock is satisfactory for the needs of the programmes. The Institution subscribes to a number of online academic research engines and journals which supplement the hard copy stock on the library shelves. Students interviewed commended the helpfulness of the librarians in pointing them in the right direction to pursue their own research as part of their independent learning.

The Institution is keenly aware of the need to maintain security with regard to its information technology systems. To this end it employs technicians who are well trained and aware of online threats. The Institution maintains high level security software and, as a result, its systems are secure.

4.6 Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Institution carries out reviews of student satisfaction through surveys. Its annual review process is robust and takes into account student satisfaction, retention, staff and student performance and provision of resources to meet intended learning outcomes. The review leads to a report, presented to the Governing Board, which in turn establishes staff responsibilities for the achievement of action plans. The ethos of the Institution is that it is continually seeking to improve and develop the quality of its provision and the review mechanism in place is effectively geared towards supporting this.

Part of the review mechanism involves consideration of the relevance and continued validity of key performance indicators. As a private institution, the University needs to maintain its financial solvency and believes that this is best achieved by being able to offer programmes that are attractive to potential students. Therefore, its key performance indicators are geared towards comparing student performance with expected programme learning outcomes and taking appropriate remedial action where adverse variances occur. This includes a review of teaching approaches and delivery methods.

Periodic review of programmes takes place on a rolling programme basis. Periodic review and full revalidation are governed by Ministry of Education regulations and involve external academic and industrial input. Comparisons of the Institution's programmes against those of other academic institutions are carried out for benchmarking purposes. The review process ensures that academic content and delivery are current and meet the needs of prospective employers while at the same time maintaining academic rigour.

Annual programme reports state what improvements and enhancements have been made to programmes over the past academic year where these are of a minor modification nature. Major modifications take place through the periodic review process. The annual programme reports also specify what enhancements are required for programme development in the future thus enabling the Institution to ensure that the quality of its provision remains sound.

4.7 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The Institution has a very motivated, committed and experienced senior management team which displays a high degree of competence in providing strategic direction.

The Institution is administered very efficiently and provides effective individual and system support to senior management.

Teaching and learning are of a high standard and provided by motivated and experienced academic staff.

Quality assurance is characterised by a common desire to continually improve and develop the delivery of the programmes offered by the Institution.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

It is recommended that the Institution develops an action plan and procedure which can be implemented urgently if the need arises to address an unforeseen major incident.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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