

## BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

### INTERIM INSPECTION (Independent Higher Education)

**INSTITUTION:** The British College

**ADDRESS:** The Trade Tower  
Thapathali Road  
Thapathali  
Kathmandu  
44600  
Nepal

**HEAD OF INSTITUTION:** Mr Rajen Kandel

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Accredited

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 22–23 March 2023

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** Continued accreditation, 30 June 2023

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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### **1. Background to the institution**

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The British College (TBC/the Institution) was founded in 2012. The Institution is part of the Kandel Group, which is an independent, Nepali British-led investment firm. The Kandel Group includes a diverse portfolio of businesses in the education, health, hospitality and Information Technology (IT) sectors. The Institution is located on the second, third and fifth floors of the Trade Tower in Thapathali, Kathmandu.

TBC is a private limited company offering a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, including in Business Administration and Management, Computing and IT, and Hospitality. The degree programmes are awarded by the University of the West of England (UWE) and Leeds Beckett University (LBU), both located in the United Kingdom (UK).

The British College has three sister schools, which are the British Professional College, offering professional Association of Chartered Certified Accountants courses, the British Model College, delivering an A-level programme and the British International College (BIC), offering data and science programmes under Keele University. BIC is a private limited company established by the Kandel Group in 2020.

BIC was formed to allow TBC to expand the range of degree courses it offers in accordance with the limitations on student numbers required by the Nepalese Ministry of Education. BIC courses are delivered and managed by TBC. British Accreditation Council (BAC) accreditation does not cover courses provided by the British Professional College or the British Model College.

The Institution aims to be a world-class college offering British and international qualifications that equip graduates with the knowledge, skills and values they need for success in the global job market and to become successful, creative entrepreneurs.

Governance is provided by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Board of Directors. The CEO is supported by an Executive Team, which includes the Executive Director, Executive Principal, Deputy Principal and the two Heads of School.

Various changes have been made since the previous inspection, including staff changes. The Deputy Principal was appointed in February 2023 following the departure of the previous Associate Dean of Academics and the Associate Dean of Quality and Student Services. Since the previous inspection, TBC has developed a partnership with Keele University in the UK to offer degree courses in Data Science and Advanced Computer Science through BIC. The Institution now accepts students aged 17 on its Integrated Foundation Programmes, which are now validated by UWE.

### **2. Brief description of the current provision**

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TBC delivers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes awarded by three UK university partners. All courses are delivered full time and in person. In collaboration with UWE, the Institution offers International Foundation Programmes in Business and Management, and in Computing, a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree in Business and Management, a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in Cyber Security and Digital Forensics, and a Master of Science (MSc) degree in International Business Management.

In partnership with LBU, the Institution offers a BSc in Computing, a BSc degree and top-up in Hospitality Business Management, a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree in Executive and Graduate Business Administration, and an MSc in IT.

In partnership with Keele University, the Institution offers an MSc in Advanced Computer Science and a BSc in Data Science, under the BIC brand. The BSc in Data Science was not running at the time of the inspection.

In addition, TBC provides and awards its own Pre-master's courses in Business and Management for students who do not meet the requirements for direct entry onto Level 6 courses. TBC also offers courses in preparation for English language examinations. These courses do not form part of the BAC accreditation.

At the time of the inspection, 1,436 students were enrolled, and there were 295 future bookings. Most students are aged over 18, and the majority are male. There were 18 students enrolled who are aged 17. TBC has capacity for around 1,500 students. Most students are Nepalese, with a few international students from India, China and Myanmar.

Students are enrolled on degree programmes each September. Students on foundation courses are able to enrol in September and February. Enrolment on Pre-master's courses takes place in September, January and April each year.

All students must meet the published entry criteria for each course, which include a minimum level of previous educational achievement and a level of English language competence.

### **3. Inspection process**

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The inspection was carried out onsite over two days by one inspector. The inspector met with the CEO, the Deputy Principal, the two Heads of School and other senior managers. The inspector also met with other academic and non-academic staff and administrators. Meetings took place with teaching staff and student representatives from a number of programmes. A tour of the premises was carried out, and lessons were observed across the two days. Online administrative systems, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and student and staff records were also reviewed. The Institution fully co-operated with the inspection.

### **4. Inspection history**

<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Full Accreditation	22–24 February and 3–5 March 2021

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## **PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

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*The following judgements 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**

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Since the previous inspection, the Executive Team has been restructured. A new post of Deputy Principal was created following the departure of the previous Associate Dean of Academics and the Associate Dean of Quality and Student Services. An experienced and suitably qualified Deputy Principal was appointed in February 2023.

A new Head of School role has been created to lead each of the Institution's two schools of Computing and Business. Two existing experienced and well-qualified Programme Leaders have been successfully promoted into these roles, providing effective leadership and management.

The organisational structure of the Institution's support departments has also been revised to provide clearer lines of responsibility, with managers formally appointed to the Institution's support departments, including Admissions and Outreach, Registry and Examinations, IT Services and Student Services. Managers are suitably experienced and qualified to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have expanded the curriculum offer. A collaborative franchise agreement with Keele University is now in place, offering undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes in Computing and Data Science. Programme and module leaders at TBC work closely with colleagues at Keele University to develop their understanding of the associated learning resources, delivery content and module assessments.

A new BSc in Cyber Security and Digital Forensics has been launched in partnership with UWE to meet the growing global demand for skills and expertise in this area. The two International Foundation Programmes are now offered in collaboration with, and awarded by, UWE. The Institution now accepts students aged 17 onto the International Foundation Programmes.

A new student and staff counselling and well-being unit (SCWU) has been established, providing personalised mental health and counselling support to both students and staff. This was developed in collaboration with an online mental health and well-being provider. Staff and students can book free and confidential online support sessions with trained mental health professionals. SCWU colleagues also provide training to TBC staff on relevant well-being topics, such as reducing anxiety and maintaining work-life balance. The new service has proved very popular with stakeholders since its launch in July 2021, and managers hope to introduce in-person sessions in the near future.

In February 2022, leaders established the academic success centre to provide students with more specialised advice and guidance to help them develop their wider academic study skills. Students benefit from dedicated advisers who provide personalised support to help them improve their academic writing, research and presentation skills. As a result, students are more confident when approaching their module assessments and have the knowledge and skills they need to structure a formal report and carry out effective primary and secondary research.

The Institution has recently leased additional premises on the fifth floor of the Trade Tower. The fifth floor provides three additional, well-equipped and furnished classrooms to complement the existing facilities on the second and third floors.

### **2. Response to action points in last report**

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*14.8 Appropriate arrangements to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism must be fully implemented.*

Leaders have devised and implemented a suitable policy related to protecting students from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. The policy identifies appropriate staff as a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputy DSL. The policy outlines the institutional approach to staff training and the regular assessment of risks related to radicalisation and extremist ideologies. Specific training for staff was completed in October 2022, led by an appropriate expert with relevant experience. A clear and suitable action plan and risk assessment consider a range of relevant risks and how the Institution can seek to further minimise these through existing and future control measures.

### **3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report**

*It is recommended that the transition from traditional administrative systems to efficient and secure online arrangements is fully completed.*

The Institution now fully utilises a range of secure online administration systems. Administrative staff make effective use of efficient systems to manage student information, such as attendance and grade tracking, as well as for managing, tracking and organising staff records via a dedicated human resources platform. Online systems help to ensure administrative information is secure but accessible to relevant stakeholders.

*The Institution should make the procedure for accessing funding to support research activities more specific and transparent.*

Leaders have introduced a suitable research and development policy that provides transparent guidance on the financial support provided by the Institution to encourage staff to engage in research activities. The policy outlines clearly the funding available for staff undertaking research projects and doctoral studies or attending conferences, and for paid study leave that is available for research-related studies.

*Leaders and managers should consider fully implementing the research and academic development strategy, including the establishment of the Centre for Research and Academic Development, to further promote the sharing of research practice across the Institution.*

Leaders have re-established the Centre for Research and Academic Development to stimulate and promote the sharing of research practice within the Institution and with external partners. For example, academic staff and students have participated in international research symposiums to share research activities with partner institutions in Thailand. Academic staff have participated in relevant guest lecture sessions to support their understanding of writing research publications and accessing research funding. An academic staff reading group has been established in the School of Business to promote the sharing of ideas around relevant research topics.

*It is recommended that additional training be provided for lecturers to help them utilise a wider range of teaching strategies that encourage student engagement and participation.*

Since the previous inspection, lecturers have participated in a range of relevant training activities, often provided online by the Institution's higher education partners in the UK. These promote and encourage the use of engaging and interactive teaching strategies. Sessions completed include how to plan and deliver small- and large-group teaching sessions, creative facilitation and improvisation skills for teaching. Staff find the sessions valuable in expanding their repertoire of strategies to encourage student engagement and participation effectively.

### **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 has a clearly defined and documented organisational structure that has been accurately updated and communicated to all stakeholders to reflect the changes since the previous inspection.

TBC has a clear and appropriate governance structure that is formally documented and articulated. Overall governance is provided by the Board of Directors, guided by two advisory panels that meet once a year. Both panels include a range of education and industry experts who provide valuable advice and guidance to the Board on strategic issues and policy development.

The Institution has a clear and explicit risk management process, with effective oversight provided by the Board of Directors. The Board meets quarterly to review the detailed risk register and take appropriate action where required. The Executive Team meets monthly and ensures the risk register is effectively updated and maintained.

The Institution's relationships with its well-established and its more recent education partners are formally defined through relevant and transparent partnership agreements.

The Institution has a range of clear and effective communication channels in place to ensure stakeholders at all levels are kept informed, including the effective use of online platforms and the VLE.

TBC has a clear, five-year strategy for the development of its higher education provision that is aligned with the Institution's vision and mission. Leaders have clear plans in place to increase the number of students from an increasingly broad regional and international geographical area whilst maintaining a high-quality student experience.

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#### 4.2 General and Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

An effective management structure is in place for the two academic schools and for the range of support and administrative departments. The revised organisational structure is clearly defined, documented and understood by all stakeholder groups, including staff and students.

TBC continues to implement an appropriate and effective committee structure. The Institution has recently established the Innovation and Quality Committee, where senior leaders, heads of school and the professional heads of each department meet to discuss creative and innovative ideas to improve the quality of provision further. Committee reports are clear and assist leaders effectively in their decision-making.

The Institution is administered effectively. Administrative policies, procedures and systems are well documented and disseminated effectively. Staff and student records are accurately maintained on accessible and secure online systems.

In meetings with inspectors, students confirmed that they have reliable and timely access to their records, including their module grades, attendance rates and academic transcripts. Inspection findings confirm this view.

Leaders and managers recruit staff who are suitably qualified and experienced. Job descriptions and specifications are clear and appropriate.

Academic management is effective. Programme and module leaders implement effectively the programmes of study designed and validated by the Institution's education partners in the UK. Academic staff meet regularly with partner staff to ensure they fully understand the delivery and assessment requirements of each module.

The Institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable students for its courses. Students confirmed that their application enquiries had been responded to promptly and appropriately. No contrary indicators were identified during the inspection.

The TBC website gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the Institution's location, premises and facilities, and the range and nature of resources and services offered.

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#### 4.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

Academic staff have the required subject knowledge and experience to teach the courses to which they are allocated. Lecturers make use of appropriate teaching strategies to promote student engagement and participation, for example, whole class discussions and applied case studies. The routine checking of the understanding of all students in lectures and seminars to ensure they have fully grasped new topics and concepts does not always take place.

Staff and students benefit from access to high-quality course materials and learning resources produced and shared by the Institution's UK education partners. Course materials are appropriately presented and sufficiently comprehensive to enable students to achieve the programme objectives. Materials are shared effectively via the VLE to ensure they are easily accessible.

Students benefit from appropriate assessment tasks that are clearly written. Students are encouraged to apply what they have learned to specific scenarios, projects and case studies to support them in developing the applied skills required by industry.

Assignments and module handbooks outline clearly what students need to do to meet stipulated levels of achievement. Students confirm that they receive detailed and supportive assessment feedback, which helps them to understand how to improve. No indicators to the contrary were identified during the inspection.

The Institution takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating, including plagiarism. For example, originality screening software is consistently used for all formal written assessment submissions.

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

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The student services department ensures that students benefit from high levels of dedicated support and guidance to meet their pastoral needs. For example, students can access specialist mental health and counselling support through the SCWU to ensure that their well-being needs are met. Students reported that they feel well supported and empowered to express their own ideas while studying at TBC. Inspection findings confirm this view.

Leaders have implemented adequate safeguarding and e-safety policies and procedures to meet the needs of the small number of students aged 17 on the International Foundation Programme. Staff have completed relevant basic safeguarding awareness training, which outlines the Institution's responsibilities for ensuring that younger students are safe.

A suitable DSL and deputy DSL have recently been identified. At the time of the inspection, these designated staff members had undertaken basic safeguarding training and were well aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding. They were in the process of completing more detailed training at the appropriate level to help them understand their role and responsibilities further.

Relevant safer recruitment checks are undertaken for staff who have regular contact with students aged under 18, including Nepalese Police clearance certificates and reference checks.

The Institution has implemented effective arrangements to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, including relevant policies, training and risk assessments.

Students benefit from the specialist support and guidance provided by staff in the academic success centre, which helps them to learn effectively and efficiently.

The Institution's international students are provided with relevant guidance and assistance. A specific student handbook is now available, offering information and advice specific to international students on topics such as food, shopping, entertainment and details of public holidays in Nepal.

There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on required student attendance and punctuality. Student attendance is measured and recorded regularly and accurately. Clear guidance is provided to lecturers on how to deal with students who are late to their teaching sessions. However, this is not consistently implemented in all cases.

Students have access to valuable enrichment opportunities provided through the Institution's international mobility programme to help them develop their understanding of the world of work and possible progression opportunities. For example, students are able to participate in overseas residential visits to hear first-hand from entrepreneurs and corporate guest speakers. They can participate in industry visits to help prepare them to take their next steps on completion of their course.

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#### 4.5 Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff. Access to the premises is appropriately secure and restricted.

The premises are clean and very well maintained and decorated. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning are adequate. Washrooms are clean and sufficient in number.

Classrooms are well equipped, adequate in number and size, and effectively support learning. Students undertaking computer courses benefit from access to appropriate specialised learning areas, such as a laboratory where students are able to use specialist robotics and single-board computers to practise their practical skills in coding and programming. Leaders have invested in a specialist cyber-security IT laboratory to ensure students can access high-specification hardware and specialist digital forensics software.

The premises provide a range of spaces for students to study in groups or individually. Academic staff have access to sufficient space for preparing lessons, marking work and meeting with students. Administrative offices are adequate in size and suitably resourced to ensure the effective administration of the Institution.

The library provides students with a suitable range of well-organised learning materials, including books and journals, as well as online materials. The library has appropriately qualified staff. Opening times are sufficient and meet students' needs well.

The Institution's IT resources are effective and well managed. Students benefit from access to the Institution's own clear and well-resourced VLE, as well as the online learning environment provided by each of the education partners in the UK. This ensures that students have access to a range of effective online resources that assist with their learning.

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#### 4.6 Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The Institution has an appropriate, formal student representation mechanism in place to obtain and record regular feedback. Class representatives are voted in by their peers and undertake relevant training to help them understand their role and responsibilities. Representatives regularly participate in staff–student liaison meetings to provide formal feedback to the Institution.

Leaders and managers have effective and structured processes in place to consider all student feedback and they take prompt and relevant action where required. The Institution has effective mechanisms in place to inform students about the actions taken as a result of their feedback.

The Institution is committed to an ethos of continual improvement. Established and effective systems are in place to allow leaders and managers to review standards and assess performance. A comprehensive quality assurance framework outlines the processes in place for maintaining the quality of academic standards in line with the academic regulations relevant to each of the Institution’s three UK partner universities.

Leaders and managers undertake regular and systematic performance monitoring in relation to each of the programmes provided. Performance is reviewed against clearly specified and appropriate performance indicators, including student completion and achievement rates and levels of student satisfaction.

Leaders and managers systematically review feedback from external examiners and take action where required. For example, staff participate in regular partnership meetings to ensure they fully understand the expectations and requirements of each franchise partner and how they contribute to effective academic practice.

Leaders and managers ensure that detailed action plans for enhancement are implemented and regularly reviewed. For example, a faculty development plan has been formalised that clearly sets out the useful range of opportunities lecturers can engage in to further develop their teaching practice and disseminate good practice across the Institution.

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4.7 Online, Distance and Blended Learning (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met  NA

**Comments**

All courses are delivered in person, although students have access to high-quality online learning materials and resources through the Institution’s VLE and the online learning environments provided by partner institutions in the UK.

Students are provided with relevant instructions and guidance on how to use the various online platforms that support their learning. This ensures that they are able to access the course materials they need in order to learn effectively and efficiently.

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4.8 Compliance Declaration

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**Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.**

Yes  No

**PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS**

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**STRENGTHS**

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Students benefit from helpful advice and guidance provided by the dedicated academic success centre, which effectively supports their wider academic study skills.

The counselling and well-being unit provides staff and students with access to specialist support to meet their mental health and well-being needs.

Leaders have invested in up-to-date, specialist technologies to ensure students are able to develop and apply their practical skills in coding, programming and digital forensics.

Staff benefit from a wide range of training and enhancement opportunities offered by the Institution and its UK partners to support their continuing professional development in teaching and research.

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

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Ensure that designated safeguarding leads and their deputies fully complete safeguarding training at the appropriate level.

High    Medium    Low

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

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It is recommended that lecturers are supported to use a range of appropriate strategies to check students' understanding in lectures and seminars.

The Institution should ensure that the punctuality policy is more consistently implemented.

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE**

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