



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Independent Higher Education)

INSTITUTION:	Rushmore Business School
ADDRESS:	Rushmore Complex Sodnac Link Road Quatre Bornes Mauritius
HEAD OF INSTITUTION:	Dr Nitto Essoo
ACCREDITATION STATUS:	Accredited
DATE OF INSPECTION:	4 October 2023
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:	Continued accreditation, 25 January 2024

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Rushmore Business School (RBS/the Institution) is a private college offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses in subjects including business, Information Technology (IT) and law.

RBS was founded in 2002 in response to a major reform of post-secondary education and training by the Mauritian government and the subsequent increase in demand for higher level courses offered within the private sector.

RBS is located in its own premises on a development site on the outskirts of the town of Quatre Bornes in Mauritius. RBS moved to its current premises in 2012.

The Institution's mission is to be one of the leading business schools in the region, offering life-changing access to a high-quality education that meets every student's aspiration and enhances their future in an inclusive environment. It aims to transfer its solutions to management problems through its students, research and consultancy by making international degrees accessible to everyone. The Institution's long-term ambition is to offer its own local degrees alongside United Kingdom (UK) degrees to aid widening access to higher education in Mauritius.

The Institution is a private limited company that is led by a Director, who reports to a Board of Directors (BD). The Director is supported by the Academic Director and a team of heads of department, as well as academic and professional support staff.

The Institution has established a number of boards and committees that represent the key external and internal stakeholders to assist in performing the strategic and academic functions of the Institution and providing advice. These are the BD, Academic Board (AB), Health & Safety Committee (HSC), Staff Welfare & Events Committee (SWEC), Marketing Committee (MC), Finance Committee (FC), Exams Committee (EC) and the Industry Advisory Committee (IAC). Each board or committee has a specific area of responsibility and makes decisions within the scope of their regulations.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Since 2002, RBS has initiated a number of collaborative partnerships with universities in the UK for courses at undergraduate and postgraduate level. The Institution delivers programmes from Level 5 to Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) across a range of subject areas. It also delivers a number of courses awarded by professional and statutory bodies.

RBS offers both full-time and part-time courses with in-person delivery. The full-time courses are offered during the weekdays. The part-time courses are run in the evenings or at the weekends. The minimum age to enrol on any programme is 18 years.

At the time of the inspection, there were 252 full-time students and 151 part-time students, of which a small majority are male. All students are over the age of 18. The maximum capacity of the Institution is 700. The majority of the student population are from Mauritius, with a small number of international students from African countries, including Madagascar and Tanzania.

Where possible, the Institution aligns its course start dates with its partner universities to ensure standardisation of delivery and assessments. The intakes normally take place in September each year. However, there may be additional intakes to satisfy local demand. Any late applicants are offered the opportunity to enrol at the next available intake. Each course has detailed entry requirements.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out online over two half-days by one inspector. The inspector held discussions with the Director, the Academic Director and a number of heads of department. Meetings were held with a group of students and with academic and professional support staff. Live lessons were observed, and a wide range of documentation was scrutinised. A virtual tour of the premises was undertaken. The Institution was very well prepared for the inspection and gave full co-operation to the inspector.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	20–21 June 2007
Re-accreditation	10–11 February 2011
Supplementary	3 July 2012
Interim	3 July 2012
Re-accreditation	20–21 October 2015
Interim	15 August 2017
Re-accreditation	28–29 October 2019

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

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

Since the previous inspection, the Institution has developed its premises by moving the library to the ground floor to provide students with easier access and more study space.

2. Response to action points in last report

6.7 A formal staff appraisal system must be implemented.

This action point is now met.

A clear, well-documented and transparent formal appraisal system has been introduced that allows managers to monitor and review the performance of all staff. An appropriate system of classroom observations for teaching staff ensures that the quality of teaching is maintained and reviewed with staff.

As a result, issues and opportunities are successfully identified and effectively managed.

14.8 Appropriate arrangements to protect participants from the risks of radicalisation and extremism must be put in place.

This action point is now met.

The Institution has in place an appropriate policy on preventing radicalisation. The policy is sufficiently detailed and includes sections dealing with indicators of radicalisation, the reasons why individuals may become radicalised, and how concerns will be assessed and investigated. Staff are made aware of the policy through induction. Students are told about the policy during induction and the information is also made available on the Institution's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for them to access.

Suitable radicalisation training has taken place, with all staff having undertaken the training. The Institution has carried out an appropriate risk assessment on any potential issues regarding radicalisation and extremism.

As a result, students are appropriately protected from the risks from radicalisation and extremism.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

No recommendations were identified in the previous inspection report.

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

A comprehensive and well-documented structure effectively supports the development of the Institution and its ability to ensure that high standards of academic achievement and student care are maintained. The role and extent of authority of the Director and the BD are well developed, and clearly defined, documented and effectively communicated to all relevant stakeholders. This ensures that the changing needs and future aims of the Institution are met.

The Director and BD provide clear oversight, and senior managers and relevant committees have a clear understanding of their delegated decision-making authority on all financial and academic matters.

The BD and AB are the two senior committees within the Institution. They have decision-making authority on all financial matters in the case of the BD, and all academic matters in the case of the AB. Both meet regularly to monitor the Institution's financial position and academic performance respectively and to address any issues that might present risks if they are not resolved in a timely manner. Consequently, the Institution is highly effective in taking action when required to manage and mitigate business risks.

There are highly effective channels of communication between internal and external stakeholders, including through effective use of the Institution's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and Management Information System (MIS).

A comprehensive strategy for the development of the Institution's education provision has successfully enabled the Institution to develop its courses in line with its objectives and aims. A detailed annual strategic implementation plan is produced and disseminated. Key stakeholders' views are central to the plan and inform the strategic direction of the Institution. The aims and objectives of RBS are well communicated to all stakeholders via its website and promotional materials.

The Institution conducts its financial affairs in accordance with Mauritian law, with its accounts and finances being subject to regular, independent external audit. This ensures appropriate scrutiny, transparency and probity.

4.2 General and Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The Institution's organisation chart is clear and details the Institution's well-developed and comprehensive management structure effectively. Oversight is clearly defined, documented and well understood by all stakeholders. The structure is communicated well to all stakeholders during staff and student inductions, in job description documentation and on the Institution's website. As a result, all stakeholders understand how the Institution is managed at different levels.

Clear and effective reporting arrangements are in place at all levels and are understood by staff. Roles and responsibilities are clearly set out in job descriptions and in relevant handbooks and policy documents.

A well-developed committee structure that is appropriate for the size of the organisation is in place. Appropriate reporting lines to the management structure have been established, with a range of committees informing management decision-making effectively. The terms of reference for the Institution's committees are clearly stated and appropriate. Meetings of committees are accurately recorded, with clear action planning.

Appropriately sized administration teams, whose members are well experienced, provide effective support to managers to meet the day-to-day needs of the Institution. Available administrative support is well documented and understood by staff. For example, details of the available support and administration policies and procedures are available on the Institution's online platform and in the staff and student handbooks.

Classes are clearly scheduled and take full account of the requirements of each course offered. All timetables are available online so that students have the most up-to-date and accurate information. Appropriate rooms are allocated to deliver the Institution's programmes.

A range of electronic administration and information systems are used effectively to record and monitor applicants' initial enquiries, applications and course enrolments. Comprehensive student records are kept

both through the application process and during students' studies. These include appropriate checks on identification and prior achievement. The records are accurate and well documented. Records are securely stored, easily accessed and used very effectively by relevant staff.

A well-developed recruitment process ensures that all academic and administrative staff are recruited to their roles effectively. All staff appointments strictly follow legislative requirements and are in accordance with the Institution's recruitment policy. The policies and procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff are comprehensive and ensure the safety of students. As a result, the Institution employs and retains well-qualified and experienced staff in all roles.

Academic and administrative staff roles and responsibilities are clearly detailed. Comprehensive and detailed job specifications and an effective staff induction process ensure that all staff are aware of the scope of their role and relevant policies. Staff confirm that they have access to appropriate complaints and appeals procedures and a published equality and diversity policy.

Appropriate policies for the design and validation of the Institution's programmes ensure that they are in alignment with the Institution's vision and mission and its partnership contractual requirements. The Institution delivers a range of awards through partnership agreements with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). These agreements follow the partnership processes. Learning outcomes are clear, appropriate and made publicly available, including an overview of teaching methods and assessment requirements. As a result, in meetings, students reported that they have a clear understanding of the scope and content of their modules and courses.

Regularly scheduled and recorded meetings of academic staff ensure that academic programmes are monitored and reviewed effectively. Consequently, the curriculum is well developed, fit for purpose and meets the needs of students.

Students provide specific feedback to inform the development of their courses through their course representatives and other feedback opportunities, including at board level. Feedback is systematically considered by academic and senior managers, and appropriate action is taken where necessary.

Comprehensive entry criteria are provided in course descriptions for each programme of study and are freely available to prospective students. Any language or other requirements for a course are clearly set out. This ensures that students understand the level of competency required in order to be accepted on each programme.

The application process is well developed and ensures that students meet published entry requirements and that any claimed qualifications are appropriately verified by the Institution. Application queries are responded to quickly. Prospective students receive comprehensive information and guidance about the requirements of each programme, ensuring that they are able to make fully informed decisions about their study options.

The Institution actively encourages academic staff to undertake research and publish their findings where possible. A review of staff Curricula Vitae (CVs) indicates that a number of staff are active in research, with recent publications in a number of academic journals.

Publicity materials are of a good quality and accurately reflect the Institution's premises and facilities. As a result, students are clear about the location and the range of resources available. The marketing team and senior managers regularly review, and make any necessary changes to, publicity materials to ensure their accuracy.

4.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Lecturers are well qualified and suitably experienced and have good subject knowledge and pedagogic and communication skills. Lesson observations confirm that staff are appropriately allocated to teach on courses and levels that reflect their area of expertise, qualifications and previous teaching experience to ensure a consistent learning experience for students. Course delivery is carefully monitored by the AD to ensure consistency.

Lessons meet the requirements of relevant module descriptors and fully cover the stated learning outcomes. The design of the programmes and modules is effective in supporting and enabling students to develop their knowledge and skills so that they are successful in final examinations and assessments.

Lessons are well planned and meet the needs and learning styles of the students, helping to ensure that appropriate levels of progress are made in lessons. A mixture of group and individual activities engages students and supports their learning effectively. Additionally, staff encourage and develop students' independent learning skills effectively via in-class activities.

Assessment schedules for each course are detailed on the Institution's VLE. Schedules provide detailed information regarding assignment submission dates and any examination revision periods or examination dates. In meetings, students confirm that they are aware of the nature and timing of the assessment of their course.

Appropriate procedures to discourage and penalise cheating and plagiarism are in place. A detailed academic misconduct policy is available, and all assessment evidence is appropriately screened for authenticity using appropriate commercial software to confirm originality.

Clear guidance is provided to students through handbooks and published policies on how to appeal grades and claim mitigating circumstances, if applicable. Students confirm that they are made aware of these.

Course materials are of a good quality and are designed for a specific and clearly stated level of study. A wide range of resources is available on the Institution's VLE, which effectively supports learning and enables students to achieve the stated aims of their chosen programme of study. Course materials for franchised provision are supported by the partner university.

4.4 Student Support, Guidance and Progression (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The Head of Student Support is responsible for student welfare and is well supported by an appropriate number of well-qualified staff. Staff are readily accessible to all students to provide advice and guidance, as well as supporting students with a wide range of pastoral and welfare issues. As a result, students report that they are very happy with the support provided by the Institution.

Students receive a comprehensive induction prior to commencement of their studies. This includes a tour of RBS premises, details of available IT services and an introduction to their academic programme, including expectations on attendance and detailed information about assessment. Induction also provides information on the support services available to students, as well as an introduction to the partner university, where relevant. There is a suitable documented policy and procedure for dealing with discrimination and abusive behaviour.

General enquiries from students and any issues with access to the Institution's IT services are dealt with quickly and efficiently. In meetings with students, they confirmed that they have good access to academic staff outside the scheduled teaching and learning sessions. They report that staff regularly make themselves available to provide further assistance and that they can readily contact staff to discuss academic matters via e-mail.

An appropriate and fair complaints procedure is in place. This provides clear details of how to submit a complaint. Students are appropriately advised of BAC's complaints procedure during induction.

Appropriate support is provided by the Institution for international students, both before and during their studies. Students are provided with detailed information prior to travelling, which includes visa support, embassy information, and accommodation and travel advice.

RBS has an appropriate, clear and published policy on student attendance and punctuality, and students report that they understand the attendance and punctuality requirements of their study programmes.

4.5 Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The Institution has secure tenure on the premises as it owns them on a freehold basis. The Institution has been granted the legal right by the Ministry of Education to use the premises for the delivery of higher education teaching and learning.

The Institution's premises are well maintained, decorated and clean. Access is secure and appropriately restricted. As a result, premises provide a safe learning and working environment for students and staff.

The premises are well resourced and provide a comfortable space for staff and students to work, socialise and receive visitors. Toilets are adequate in number and are clean and well maintained. Staff and students confirm that heating, ventilation and air-conditioning are all appropriate.

Classrooms and other learning areas of the premises are well appointed and resourced, adequate in number and size, and effective in supporting learning. Classrooms are well equipped to meet the requirements of courses. The Institution has a number of suitable areas in which to conduct examinations.

The provision for students and staff to relax and consume food and drink is very good. An appropriate number of areas are provided for students and staff to store their personal possessions. A number of appropriate rooms and offices are available for academic staff and managers to hold meetings.

A wide range of learning materials and other resources are available to RBS students. Resources are accessible from the Institution's VLE and include a wide range of online books, journals and periodicals. In addition, students enrolled on partner university courses have access to the partner's online resources.

The library areas are spacious and provide a comfortable area for independent study or group work. A clear lending policy is in place. The library is staffed by appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Opening times are sufficient and reflect the needs of students well.

Appropriate IT technical support is in place. This ensures that the systems are operational at all times.

4.6 Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The views of all stakeholders are canvassed and recorded regularly. Regular feedback is sought from students, both through end-of-course surveys and also through regular, formal meetings. There are a number of formal committees and regular meetings where staff and students, through their representatives, are able to share views and raise any concerns.

A wide range of management policies and standard operating procedures are clearly documented and effectively shared via the Institution's VLE and also provided to staff and students within their relevant handbooks. As a result, all stakeholders have easy access to, and are aware of, the Institution's key policies.

An appropriate range of performance indicators and metrics are in place. Performance is regularly reviewed against these benchmarks to identify areas for improvement.

The Institution has a broad range of systematic mechanisms in place to review the performance of its academic programmes, including consideration of programme reports against set performance criteria. This leads to the identification of action plans to help enhance the quality of provision over time.

4.7 Online, Distance and Blended Learning (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

4.8 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Strengths

A highly effective and comprehensive structure of committees provides detailed oversight of the Institution's day-to-day activities.

Highly effective teaching results in good levels of student satisfaction, engagement and progress.

A well-developed pastoral system supports students at the Institution very effectively.

High-quality premises support learning effectively and enhance the student experience.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

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

None

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS –FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:

Nigel Chambers

Lead Inspector