



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

INSTITUTION: Markfield Institute of Higher Education

ADDRESS: Ratby Lane
Markfield
Leicestershire
LE67 9SY

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Dr Manazir Ahsan (Rector) Dr Zahid Parvez (Director)

Accreditation status: Accredited

Date of inspection: 14 September 2015

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION ON ACCREDITATION: 26 November 2015

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

The Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE or the Institute) was established in 2000 by the Islamic Foundation, which has been engaged in research and academic activities since its establishment in Leicestershire in 1974 and has gained a national and international reputation as an active research and publication centre in the field of Islamic Studies, with a number of journals and books published. Its research facilities (including one of the biggest Islamic libraries and video resources in Europe) as well as its seminars and conferences have been used by scholars from within the UK and abroad. MIHE came into being to fulfil a growing need for systematic Islamic studies within the framework and discipline of British academic conventions leading to academic awards: undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

In 2012 MIHE achieved educational oversight from the QAA and has been granted Highly Trusted Sponsored Status. Since 2012 the institution has been subject to QAA's annual monitoring process for educational oversight and is due to undergo a Higher Education Review by QAA in 2016.

MIHE has been a pioneer in the field of Islamic Banking in the UK and was the first institution in the UK to offer a recognised academic qualification in the field of Islamic finance.

2. Brief description of the current provision

MIHE has had collaborative arrangements with a number of UK higher education institutions including the University of Portsmouth (2000 – 2004), Loughborough University (2004 -2008) and University of Gloucestershire (2008 – present). In 2013 the University of Gloucestershire gave MIHE notice of its intention to end the partnership as part of a strategic step to reduce the number of its collaborative partners. MIHE has since forged an agreement with Newman University which now validates all of its courses. Currently, MIHE continues to work with the University of Gloucestershire until a small number of students complete the final stages of their courses. Courses validated by Newman University commenced in September 2013.

MIHE provides courses leading to BA, MA, MEd and PhD degrees. It has also developed a MA in Muslim Chaplaincy which has not yet recruited students. All the courses are in the field of Islamic Studies. Students benefit from an environment which is very conducive to academic work and have access to the well-stocked, purpose-built library and IT resources.

New course provision is currently being planned to include a BA Islamic Studies with Education and an BA Islamic Studies with Business. Subject to the outcomes of market research, it is planned to submit an application for validation by Newman University in February 2016 with a view to seeking validation in April/May 2016 for a September 2016 start.

3. Inspection process

The interim inspection was undertaken by one inspector who met with the Director and reviewed a range of documentation.

4. Inspection history

Full accreditation:	03 December 2009
Interim inspection:	15 July 2011
Reaccreditation inspection:	19/20 November 2013

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

The key change since the 2013 reaccreditation inspection has been the change of validating university. Following a five year partnership with the University of Gloucestershire, the University informed MIHE in early 2013 that due to a change in its partnership strategy it would be terminating its agreement. MIHE approached a number of universities and concluded that the choice of Newman University, which has a similar ethos to MIHE, could be mutually beneficial. Discussions concluded with a formal approval and validation event in January/February 2014 and the formal agreement was signed in April/May 2014. The new agreement validates all of MIHE's provision with the exception of PhD programmes because, as a relatively new university, Newman does not as yet possess research degree awarding powers. The programmes validated by Newman University remain almost identical to those validated by the University of Gloucestershire although some of the award titles have changed slightly and some learning outcomes have been modified slightly.

MIHE students remain largely self-funded although UK/EU undergraduate students are now able to seek funding from the Student Loan Company. Recent changes in UKVI arrangements for the recruitment of international students has had a detrimental effect on the number of international students recruited by MIHE which means that less than 50% of MIHE's student body are international students.

2. Response to actions points in last report

All educational certificates of staff must be verified and dated and signed appropriately.

This has been actioned and documentation reviewed confirmed this.

The guide to the Institute's location must clearly show the time and distance from Leicester to MIHE.

This has been actioned and both the website and publicity materials clearly indicate the location of MIHE.

MIHE should avoid advertising their future programmes before validation, unless the procedures for such validation are in their final stages.

There has not been any need for advertising programmes prior to validation but MIHE is keenly aware of the need to ensure that should the occasion arise; it will ensure that such programmes are clearly indicated as being 'subject to validation'.

The 'Staff Development Activity Form' must be dated and signed by both the member of academic staff and the line manager.

This has been actioned and a review of forms confirmed this.

MIHE must have a regularly recorded system for measuring and analysing student progress or outcomes and variations of achievement.

MIHE has always routinely recorded and analysed student performance as an integral part of the annual monitoring process. It now uses a dedicated data base to aid the process of analysing individual student performance. This action is now therefore complete.

The name of the second marker must be mentioned clearly beside his/ her signature.

This has been actioned and a review of student assessed work and associate internal moderation forms confirmed this.

3. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements – spot check

3.1 Management, Staffing and Administration

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments The very detailed Training Plan 2014-15 included sessions held with Newman University. The detailed recording of staff appraisal and actions agreed as a result is continuing. Academic staff continue to sustain impressive research outputs.				

3.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments MIHY continues to recruit highly qualified academic staff with track records in research and publications and provides ample opportunities for this development to continue. Detailed assignment briefs are used which indicates tasks linked to learning outcomes. High quality written feedback to students. Assessments are now being submitted on line.				

3.3 Student Welfare

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments MIHE continues to seek and respond to student feedback at module level and progress this to annual monitoring reports				

3.4 Premises and Facilities

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Staff and students continue to benefit from a large campus in a peaceful rural environment which is highly conducive to learning.				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

<p>Institution's strengths</p> <p>Highly qualified academic staff who are active researchers in Islamic Studies</p> <p>A campus which is highly conducive to learning</p>

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable	