



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM VISIT (International Centre)

INSTITUTION: Professional Institute of Marketing and Business Studies Ltd.

ADDRESS: #1 Harris Street
Curepe
Trinidad
West indies

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr Ramgopaul Roop

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF VISIT: 4 July 2018

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION ON ACCREDITATION: Continued accreditation 27 September 2018

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

The Professional Institute of Marketing and Business Studies Limited (the Institution/PIMBS) was established on 11 July 1997. It provides professional courses in marketing and business studies as a response to an identified need for relevant education for young people and the workforce in Trinidad and Tobago, which involves guided tuition utilising Information Technology (IT).

PIMBS is based in the town of Curepe, which is about 12 kilometres east of Trinidad's capital city, Port of Spain. It also has a secondary education high school, called Our Lady of Fatima High School, which shares the same site. The high school operates Monday to Friday, during the day, while the tertiary college operates during an evening and on Saturdays offering face-to-face tuition to part-time learners. This inspection and BAC accreditation relate solely to the tertiary level provision.

The Institution's mission is to provide the highest quality marketing, business and environmental training by ensuring that the training is relevant, up-to-date and accepted locally and internationally. Its long-range institutional plan is to offer affordable education and training courses to its membership ensuring that all activities are applicable to the local and international work requirements. Reference is made in the mission statement and long-range plan to membership because, under the Institution's constitution, all learners become members on payment of a fee. The Institution also aims to provide relevant work related tuition in marketing, business studies and environmental sciences and assists in the placement of graduates into jobs, which are suited to their experience as well as provide education at a reasonable price.

There are three directors of the Institution, the Chairman, Managing Director and Business Development Director. The Institution employs part-time lecturers reporting, through a coordinator, directly to the Managing Director. In addition, there are a number of other senior roles including a Marketing Manager, Quality Manager, IT Officer and Chief Financial Officer. These roles also report directly to the Managing Director. The Managing Director reports to the Board of Directors on which he sits. The Institution is a company limited by shares. Its premises are leasehold.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Institution's tertiary education provision is exclusively for part-time learners studying for qualifications in marketing and business studies that are offered by the Association of Business Executives (ABE). All the learners are in employment.

The Institution was first accredited by ABE in November 2002. The ABE qualifications, at levels four to six, are assessed by examination whilst the level seven qualification is assessed by a mixture of examinations and assignments. The Institution previously provided courses which led to awards made by the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM). The Institution has been accredited by the CIM since 1998. Since January 2016, it has been undertaking teach-out arrangements for its CIM learners as CIM did not re-register to offer courses in Trinidad and Tobago after its registration expired with the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago. The teach-out arrangements are operated by a different organisation offering online teaching. As a result, the Institution no longer offers the CIM accredited courses in Trinidad and Tobago.

All ABE modules are offered bi-annually with enrolment in January and September, leading to assessment the following December or June respectively. All modules are of nine months' duration. Learners are free to sign up with the examination body for an earlier assessment if they feel that they are ready.

In addition, the Institution offers computer courses and locally developed three month professional certificates, although, at the time of the inspection, there were no learners undertaking these courses.

The Institution offers a Tertiary Passport, which is designed to bridge the gap between secondary and tertiary education for mature learners who have been out of secondary education for an extended period and wish to

pursue tertiary education. It also offers Prior Learning Assessment for learners who are working but who have not obtained the qualifications necessary to enter tertiary level courses.

There are no learners under the age of 18. The majority of the learners were female in the last cohort and none were in attendance at the time of the inspection.

3. Inspection visit process

The inspection was carried out over half a day by one inspector. A meeting was held with the Managing Director, the Business Development Director, the Chief Financial Officer and a senior member of academic staff. In addition, an interview was held with a learner who had completed her course and came in to the Institution specifically to meet with the inspector.

4. Inspection history

Full inspection:	18-19 January 2017
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PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments 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

A full-time Administration Manager was appointed on 1 March 2017.

The CIM courses have now been taught out completely.

2. Response to action points in last report

2.5 The Institution must ensure that academic records are easily accessible in a timely fashion for internal use and external review purposes.

Although the requirement refers to academic records, it was agreed that it should refer to administrative rather than academic records. Both administrative and academic records are now contained within a comprehensive filing and document control system. The system has been implemented effectively and the process is clearly set out in a detailed procedure. This enables administrative and academic files to be retrieved efficiently and enhances the overall administration of the institution.

8.2 The Institution must provide statistical data to support the annual programme report and include learner satisfaction, completion rates and progression where appropriate.

The Institution has established a comprehensive quality management system, which enables it to measure outcomes against expected results. The quality management system incorporates 12 committees, such as the education advisory committee, the scheme board and the health and safety committee. These committees meet regularly over a year to review various aspects of the provision and quality. The committees each provide minutes which then lead to an action point matrix. The committees operate effectively by identifying issues which need attention. These are recorded on the action point matrix and signed off when the action has been completed.

The information contained in the reports of the 12 committees include statistics relating to learner satisfaction, completion rates and progression as well as predicted outcomes on grades from final assessments. This information is consolidated into a composite annual report and presented to the board. The first annual report covers the period July 2017 to July 2018 and was approved by the board on 7 July 2018.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The structure chart and the narrative in the job description relating to the Administrative Manager should be consistent.

The Institution has provided a job description and organisational structure chart which clearly show the reporting lines for the Administrative Manager whose role is to co-ordinate all the institutional administrative and operational functions. The appointment of the Administrative Manager has released time for the Business Development Director to concentrate on strategic issues relating to the Institution.

It is recommended that the Institution establishes a robust financial plan to ensure its future sustainability.

A robust financial plan has now been established by the Institution, which provides statistical analysis to support its proposals and a realistic expectation of future learner numbers. It also includes potential income generated from a new course development which is currently awaiting approval from the government.

All procedural documents should be provided with a clear table of contents.

Procedural documents now contain a clear table of contents although there are some minor inaccuracies in page numbering. Despite these minor inaccuracies, the table of contents enables easy navigation of the documents.

The flowchart explaining the staff complaints procedure should be amended to include how a member of staff makes a complaint against a learner.

The flowchart and narrative in the complaints procedure clearly sets out the process for a complaint by a staff member against a learner as well as against another staff member. The process also makes appropriate provision for the Corporate Secretary to follow through legal proceedings where violence or drug use has been involved.

It is recommended that the links between staff appraisal and development are strengthened in the staff appraisal process.

Following a detailed research project to evaluate the effectiveness of performance appraisal and staff motivation, the employee contract was strengthened to include a statement that performance appraisal will be conducted each year and may include proposals for staff development or further training. The contract also states that the proposed staff development or training must be achieved for renewal of the contract of employment. This effectively strengthens the role of staff development within the appraisal process and provides for the employees' performance to be subsequently evaluated in the light of the staff development undertaken along with other criteria.

The website should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is accurate and up-to-date.

The website has been redeveloped and is up-to-date. It is managed in-house, updated monthly and reviewed quarterly. It is comprehensive and accurate and enhances the marketability of the Institution.

It is recommended that the minutes of relevant follow-up meetings continue to be produced after data on programme provision has been reported to the Board.

The meeting minutes of the 12 quality assurance committees are produced with follow-up actions recorded, including when the action has been completed. This provides a robust method of determining the actions required and provides an effective audit trail of the activities undertaken.

More advice on local culture should be provided to international learners within the learner handbook and in handout form.

The Institution has included a link on its website to a promotional website for tourists to Trinidad and Tobago. The website is useful and focuses on local events taking place. It does not provide a clear indication to prospective international learners about ensuring their safety and security.

It is recommended that the information provided to all users of the premises on health and safety includes the diagram to which it makes reference.

The information, issued to all users of the premises, relating to health and safety now includes a detailed diagram explaining exit routes for both floors of the building.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments The Institution has considered seriously the requirements and recommendations made in the last inspection and has responded to them very well. This indicates that the management of the Institution takes a responsible attitude and is committed to achieving improvements in its provision. A good example of its commitment has been the exercise carried out investigating the motivation of its staff. This has enabled the management of the Institution to gain a good insight into how its actions are perceived. There has been an improvement in staff morale as a result.				

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Marked learner work provides good guidance to students on what they have done well and what needs to be improved. The learners interviewed confirmed that the teaching and academic feedback provided by the teaching staff is of a high standard. Inspection findings confirm this view.				

4.3 Learner Welfare (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments The Institution offers a counselling service and also has a psychologist who offers counselling services when required. All learners are part-time and mature and most are working. As a result, the welfare support provided meets the needs of the learners. Completed contracts for learners provide appropriate and comprehensive information.				

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments The facilities provided by the Institution have not changed since the last inspection and are adequate for the courses being offered. The premises are small and the Institution hopes, in due course, to move to more substantial premises.				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS
<p>A robust financial plan has been developed to ensure that the Institution’s finances are in order.</p> <p>A thorough investigation into the motivation of staff was carried out by the Institution and appropriate follow-up action has been implemented. This represents a very good initiative to improve staff motivation.</p> <p>The Institution’s website is greatly improved and easily navigated.</p> <p>The Institution has turned the previous weakness of its administration into a strength with the establishment of the post of the Administration Manager and the setting up of a robust and efficient administrative records and filing system. This includes an effective data collection process providing detailed analysis.</p>

ACTIONS REQUIRED	Priority H/M/L
None	

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
<p>It is recommended that the tables of contents of the procedural documentation are reviewed to correct minor inaccuracies in page numbering.</p>
<p>It is recommended that advice is provided to prospective international learners on protecting themselves and keeping safe and secure in Trinidad.</p>

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	
Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable	