

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION CHANGE OF MANAGEMENT/STAFFING (College)

INSTITUTION: IMechE Argyll Ruane

ADDRESS: 4 Europa View
Sheffield Business Park
Sheffield
S9 1XH

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr Chris Kirby

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF VISIT: 30 November 2018

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 31 January 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Ruane Technical Services Limited was founded in 1985 and changed its name to Argyll-Ruane Limited (ARL) in 1988. ARL was acquired by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE) in 2012 and the name was changed to IMechE Engineering Training Solutions (ETS) in June 2016. In September 2018, IMechE ETS changed its name to IMechE Argyll Ruane (the Institution) in order to capitalise on its history and reputation. IMechE Argyll Ruane is the trading name of a division of Professional Engineering Projects Limited, which is a private limited company, wholly owned by IMechE.

The General Manager (GM) oversees all aspects of the Institution, including the teaching, examinations, administration, finance, marketing, business development, customer services and facilities. The GM is supported by a team of five senior managers responsible for specific areas of the Institution.

The previous training centres in Halesowen, Rotherham and Sheffield were closed and from 2016 all of the Institution's UK operations and training activities have been out of purpose-built facilities in Sheffield. These facilities provide generous space for teaching in both the theoretical and practical elements of the programmes offered, as well as space for administration, examination, storage and relaxation purposes.

IMechE Argyll Ruane provides training, certification and consultancy services in inspection and non-destructive testing (NDT). The training programmes are relevant to a number of key industries including, for example, onshore and offshore oil and gas, nuclear and renewable energy, aerospace, marine, defence and manufacturing. In addition, IMechE Argyll Ruane holds Approved Training Organisation (ATO) and Authorised Qualifying Body (AQB) status with the British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing (BINDT).

IMechE Argyll Ruane shares the same aims and vision as the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, which is to improve the world through engineering by inspiring the next generation, developing professional engineers and setting the agenda for the future.

Currently, IMechE Argyll Ruane is focused on developing its website and online training provision to increase student numbers, following a reduction in enrolments as a result of the decline in the oil and gas industry in recent years.

2. Brief description of the current provision

IMechE Argyll Ruane offers training in all major NDT and inspection methods, at various industry standard levels and also offer internationally recognised certification schemes. The provision includes programmes in ultrasonic testing, ultrasonic phased array, radiographic testing, magnetic particle testing, eddy current testing, penetrant testing, visual testing and weld inspection.

The NDT Inspection Training programme incorporates several of the different training programmes listed above into one course. It is delivered over a 26-week period.

Over 65 programmes were available in 2018. These are divided into more than 45 programmes that are scheduled for delivery between two and ten times during the year and an additional 21 programmes that are available as and when required. The duration of the programmes varies between one and 15 days in length, although the vast majority are between two and five days.

Student recruitment is aimed principally at professionals working for companies in the various key industries, although students are also able to enrol in a private capacity. Generally, most of the students are male. The students from overseas are predominantly from Malaysia where IMechE Argyll Ruane currently focuses its

international recruitment. During 2017, IMechE Argyll Ruane trained 1127 students and provided examinations for over 600 students in the UK. All students recruited are over 18 years of age. On the day of the inspection, there were a total of three students on two different training courses, with another 20 students undertaking examinations in various disciplines. All the students were male and from various locations around the United Kingdom (UK), with the exception of two international students from Malaysia.

Programme delivery is either through formal lectures or practical sessions using the testing equipment and associated resources. Some online training courses are available and it is anticipated that many courses will have an element of online learning in the future.

The entry requirements vary for each course but usually include a Personnel Certification in Non-Destructive Testing (PCN).

3. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted by one Inspector over half a day. Meetings were held with the General Manager, Head of Sales and Marketing and the Quality Manager. The supplementary inspection focused on the management, staffing and administration standards, due to the significant change and restructure of senior management within the organisation. Comprehensive documentation covering all aspects relating to these standards was made available for scrutiny. Full co-operation from IMechE Argyll Ruane staff was provided during the inspection process.

4. Background to the supplementary inspection

The previous interim inspection in April 2018 identified a significant change in senior management. Following a restructure, a new General Manager was appointed in February 2018 to replace the previous Managing Director. Subsequent to this, a new team of five senior managers, who are responsible for quality and training, replaced the previous team of two managers.

5. Inspection history

Full Accreditation:	10 February & 2 March 2009
Interim:	18-19 March 2010
Re-accreditation:	26-27 March 2013
Interim:	14 April 2015
Supplementary:	16 December 2015
Re-accreditation:	7-8 March 2017
Interim:	23 April 2018

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. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

1.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (full inspection)

The numbers below refer to the standards as presented in the college scheme document and main full inspection report

1. The institution is effectively managed

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|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 1.1 | The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, trustees or governing body. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.2 | The head of the institution and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.3 | There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

There is a clear management structure with the General Manager having overall control, and five senior managers each with specific areas of responsibility within the Institution. The organisational structure is clear and appropriate for the size of the Institution. Staff are all suitably qualified, including all the trainers, who have relevant industrial experience. A suitable role profile is produced for all staff, including the senior management, which is clear and appropriate for individual roles.

There are clear channels of communication with evidence of weekly senior management meetings and an annual management review meeting. Action points are identified and are reviewed at subsequent meetings which contributes to the effective organisation and operations of the Institution. Weekly meetings are held for all staff, with the meeting minutes also made available on the intranet for those who could not attend the meeting.

2. The administration of the institution is effective

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|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 2.1 | Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.2 | The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.3 | The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.4 | Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.5 | Data collection and collation systems are effective. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The management team are supported by ten administrators, who are based at the Sheffield site. These staff report to the General Manager and all have individual roles and responsibilities. The most senior members of the administration team have many years of experience in commercial organisations and have relevant qualifications in business administration. The staff feel appropriately supported in their role by the General Manager and other senior staff.

A comprehensive quality management system, which is accessible to all staff on the intranet, details appropriate policies, procedures and systems. The accessible policies include company and statutory policies relating to Information Technology (IT), health and safety, equal opportunities, data protection and anti-harassment. There are also a number of employee guides available, which cover areas such as administrative systems, learning and development opportunities, dress codes and staff grievance procedures.

The organisational policies are regularly reviewed and updated, for example, recently to take account of the name change to IMechE Argyll Ruane.

All the IT data is securely stored on a local server at the premises in Sheffield and is regularly backed up.

3. The institution employs appropriate managerial and administrative staff

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|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 3.1 | There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3.2 | Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3.3 | There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff. A staff handbook and relevant policies and detailed procedures are available for all staff.

All new staff undertake an interview with the General Manager, a representative from the human resources team and one other senior manager. Appropriate recruitment checks are carried out, including verifying qualifications and taking up references. The General Manager will also hold telephone conversations with referees for any senior management positions. This structured process is very effective in ensuring that any appointments are fair and appropriate for the role.

New staff have a mid-probation review after three months in post, with a final probation review after six months. There is an annual appraisal system in place for other staff with signed and dated input from employees and line managers and any improvement actions clearly stated. These are reviewed after six months. This is good practice and works well to evidence the achievement of specific targets and deadlines.

4. Publicity material, both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the institution and its curriculum

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|-----|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 4.1 | Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4.2 | Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The publicity materials, brochures, displays and website provide a comprehensive and accurate representation of the Institution, its location and the courses available.

All the publicity materials, website and signage have been updated with the new name. Some policies, course information, online materials and links to and from the website still include the old organisational name.

5. The institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enroll suitable students for its courses

5.1	Entry requirements for each course are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective students.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5.2	A formal application process ensures that students meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5.3	Students are properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses for which they apply, and all application enquiries responded to promptly and appropriately.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5.4	Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
5.5	Students receive a proper initial assessment which includes language ability to confirm their capability to complete the courses on which they are enrolling.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Employers and individual students are sent course information by e-mail. This includes details of the entry requirements, the course applied for and the examinations. This information is also available on the website.

There is an appropriate application process to ensure that suitable students are enrolled. Application forms are reviewed manually by the administration staff and checks are made with BINDT to verify any previous PCN registration or certification of training. This process is an efficient and effective way to check any prior qualifications or training.

IMechE Argyll Ruane works with employers and training organisations in Malaysia but has not engaged any recruitment agents.

5.5 A basic verbal assessment of English is undertaken in Malaysia for those students applying to train with IMechE Argyll Ruane in the UK. However, the students sometimes have poor English language skills when they arrive. There is no initial assessment or option on the application form for students to declare any physical or mental health conditions, medical issues or learning difficulties, which may adversely affect their ability to complete their course.

6. There is an appropriate policy on student attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it

6.1	There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on student attendance and punctuality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.2	Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all students, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.3	Student absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

There is a policy on student attendance and punctuality with accurate online registers updated and reviewed daily by the administration team.

Any students not in attendance are contacted on the same day by an administrator to establish any issues and to rebook the training. For any students who are sponsored or who have had their training paid by an employer, the relevant sponsor or employer will also be notified of any absences. This is a highly effective method of encouraging good attendance.

7. The institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary

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| 7.1 | The institution has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner institutions and employers) on all aspects of the institution's provision, including formal student representation where appropriate. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7.2 | Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7.3 | The feedback is reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7.4 | There is a mechanism for reporting on the institution's response to the feedback to the student body. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Institution obtains feedback from employers and/or sponsors by means of a questionnaire following any training or examination work undertaken. An anonymous questionnaire, which is given to students at the end of a training programme, also helps to provide constructive comments on training activities.

The feedback is analysed and reviewed on a regular basis and appropriate action is taken and fed back to the students where necessary. Any negative comments are escalated to the General Manager for further review. This is good practice and demonstrates the importance of feedback from the students and its importance in maintaining high standards.

Student feedback is also reviewed by BINDT during their inspections.

8. The institution has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement

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|-----|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 8.1 | There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the institution's performance. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8.2 | Reports are compiled at least annually which present the results of the institution's reviews and incorporate action plans. Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8.3 | Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to the management. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

There are monthly governance board meetings to review organisational performance, and monthly management reviews to analyse finance, data, results, feedback and other Key Performance Indicators. These meetings have been implemented to increase communication and have been very effective in enabling transparency in organisational developments and objectives, particularly with the recent management restructure and rebranding.

Annual performance reviews and action plans are generated to improve performance and ensure compliance with BINDT and ISO 9001 standards. Reports from accrediting bodies is analysed at the

performance review to ensure any actions or recommendations are effectively addressed. This procedure, together with other reports and feedback, formed part of the decision to restructure the senior management team to better enable them to meet the quality standards required by various inspection bodies and third parties.

1.2 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

ACTIONS REQUIRED

5.5 The Institution must implement a more formal initial assessment of English and a mechanism for identifying students with any special education needs or disabilities so that any this information can be made available to training staff for use in the planning of each course.

High Medium Low

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

All company policies, course information, online materials and links to and from the website should be updated to the reflect new name as part of the rebranding process.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE