



## **BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT**

### **SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION FOLLOWING A DEFERRAL**

**INSTITUTION:** International University in Geneva

**ADDRESS:** 20 Route de Pre-Bois  
Geneva  
1215  
Switzerland

**HEAD OF INSTITUTION:** Mr Eric Willumsen

**TYPE OF ACCREDITATION:** Independent Higher Education (IHE)

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Not accredited

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 11 January 2017

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION ON ACCREDITATION AND DATE:** Accredited 23 March 2017

## **PART A - INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Background to the institution (taken from last report)**

The International University in Geneva (IUG/the University) was established in 1997, as a for-profit institution. In 2003, it became a Swiss not-for-profit foundation. It aims to provide quality education for students who wish to progress to careers in business and management globally. It strives to foster a balance between academic and practical programmes, which are delivered by faculty, who have strong practical backgrounds in a variety of business and management fields.

The University is located in a suburb of Geneva, which is close to the airport. Its premises are based on the ground floor of a large convention centre, which is occupied by a variety of other organisations. There are 53 staff, including 11 permanent administrative, six temporary full-time teaching and 36 part-time teaching staff.

The University delivers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to students, who are drawn from a wide range of countries, within and outside the European Union. It has agreements with a large number of international higher education institutions around the world. Most of these are agreements for student and staff exchanges. There are three agreements, for joint degrees, with institutions in Russia, Mexico and Columbia. The University also has an agreement with the University of Plymouth, which enables its successful postgraduate students to progress to Doctoral programmes in Business Administration and Public Administration. Discussions are underway with Plymouth concerning the possible validation of the University's undergraduate provision.

The University's programmes are accredited by two external organisations. These are the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programmes (ACBSP) and the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education (IACBE). Both these organisations are recognised by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) in the United States of America. The University's programmes are therefore based on the American higher education academic system. Accreditation for ACBSP was reviewed in September 2016 and, for IACBE, in November 2017.

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

The University delivers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. At undergraduate level, it delivers a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), together with a range of Bachelor of Arts awards in subjects related to business and management. At postgraduate level, it delivers a Master of Business Administration, a Master of Business Administration in Sales and Marketing and a range of Master awards in business and management-related subjects. The vast majority of students are studying on a full-time basis.

### **3. Inspection process**

The supplementary inspection involved a desk-based review of responses made by the University to the actions arising from the initial inspection. These responses were considered along with an extensive range of supplementary documentary evidence, provided by the University, in support of these responses. Much of the supplementary evidence contained new policies and procedures, which the University is planning to implement. The supplementary inspection was carried out by the Lead Inspector from the initial inspection.

### **4. Inspection history**

Full inspection: 25 - 26 May 2016

### **5. Background to supplementary inspection**

The University was subject to its first accreditation inspection in May 2016. The inspection team's report contained a large number of high and medium priority action points and some recommendations. The Accreditation Committee took the decision that the most appropriate outcome was to defer accreditation and

provide the University with the opportunity to respond to the actions and recommendations. The Committee proposed that a supplementary inspection be carried out by the original Lead Inspector.

## PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon the additional evidence provided by the institution and seen by the inspector:

### 1. Response to high priority action points in the previous report, including areas still to be addressed:

#### *9.2 The University must ensure that assessments clearly link the learning outcomes to assessment criteria*

Considerable progress has been made. The University has revised its module specification template. This is informed by the template, which is used by its United Kingdom (UK) partner, Plymouth University. The University has also revised its whole approach to assessment, by eliminating attendance and participation elements in the grading process and formalising assessment around a set number of pre-defined and learning-outcome focussed projects and examinations. The assignment brief, together with its cover sheet, has also been revised and clearly links the assessment with the relevant learning outcomes.

The University has provided its generic grading criteria, which apply to all assessments. The Marking Policy requires marking to be completed against the learning objectives of the module specification. However, evidence has not been provided to demonstrate that the module assessment-specific criteria relate to the module learning outcomes. This could be evidenced through the provision of examples of assessment briefs, with the associated assessment criteria.

#### *9.5 The University must implement a secure process for the management of the assessment process for examinations*

The University has initiated a new Examination Security Policy, which is planned to be in place by September 2017. This will include the storing of examination papers in a secure environment before and after examinations. Examinations are set by academic staff and e-mailed to a unique and secure email address. They are then stored securely until the examination day. Academic staff mark the papers and then return them to the Registrar, within five working days of the examination.

Examinations are invigilated by the academic staff member, who set the examination paper. This could constitute a security risk. Therefore, the University may wish to review this practice.

#### *9.8 The University must implement a process which involves the scrutiny of assessment briefs and the moderation of assessed student work including some form of externality*

The University has developed an Assessment Moderation Policy, which requires external scrutiny and moderation. This policy states that key module assessments are subject to this policy. There is a pro forma for the external examiner to provide a report at the end of the process. Therefore, the Assessment Moderation Policy goes some way towards meeting this action, with regard to externality.

This could be further enhanced by a clear indication of which modules are subject to external scrutiny and examination, the size of the sample to be moderated, the criteria for the appointment of externals and their permitted length of service. The curriculum vitae (CV) for the externals indicates that the University appreciates the kind of criteria in terms of academic experience, which an external should be able to demonstrate.

It is not clear how the University is planning to implement internal scrutiny and moderation processes.

#### *15.2 15.3 15.4 The University must design and implement an attendance policy and enforce the University policy on punctuality*

The University has updated its Attendance Policy, which will be implemented from September 2017. An attendance register will be used initially and there are plans for an online system in the future. Students are

required to attend at least eight of their teaching sessions for each module. Those who do not are not permitted to take the module assessment.

## **2. Response to medium priority action points in the previous report, including areas still to be addressed:**

### *1.3 The University must document its policies, procedures and systems relating to the links between governance and management*

The University's IUG Governance and Management Summary clearly outlines the various bodies and post holders involved with IUG, together with their respective responsibilities. These are articulated as terms of reference. The IUG organisation chart accurately reflects this summary.

### *4.7 The University must formally document its policies, regulations and procedures for staff and student conduct and clearly link these to the information provided in the Professor and Student Handbooks*

A comprehensive set of policies and procedures has been written to address this action. The University has stated that these will replace the previous Professor and Student Handbooks and will be provided to staff and students on-line. Whilst the policies provided are comprehensive, some of them would benefit from further work to make any follow-up process clear. For example, the Academic Integrity Policy does not indicate what process should be followed where a student is found to have committed an academic offence. Likewise, the Attendance Policy makes no reference to any penalties imposed, where a student has low attendance.

### *4.12 The University must introduce a formal appraisal process for academic staff*

The University has established an academic staff appraisal system, as evidenced by the Staff Appraisal Template and the Faculty Appraisal Template. However, it is not clear whether these are separate processes or what the relationship is between these two templates.

The Faculty Peer Review process provides an appropriate teaching observation system. The University may wish to consider how the outcomes of this peer review will be captured, within the staff appraisal process, and inform decisions regarding performance evaluation, future development needs and targets.

### *5.1 The University must implement a validation and approval process to enable it to meet the expectations of higher education*

IUG has provided a Module Specification Approval Policy, a Module Specification Example and a Module Specification Template. As a result, the University has provided evidence that it now has an appropriate process for the development and approval of modules, through the Module Specification Approval Policy. This process, when fully implemented, will ensure a robust approach to the approval of modules.

The University has provided relevant information about its process for programme approval. The process includes external industry advisers and a relevant senior external advisor. It is not clear what level of academic input the latter advisor provides. Also, it is not clear what other external reference points inform programme design and provide appropriate benchmarks. The University states that its programmes are subject to review and revalidation every five years and that this process involves an external professional in the field of the programme. It is not clear if this is an industrial or academic advisor.

A formal written policy would help confirm these omissions. Therefore, the University should articulate its programme approval policy, in the same way that it has done for its modules. The University states that IACBE and ACBSP validate their programmes. However, these bodies accredit programmes, which have already been developed and validated by institutions. They do not validate programmes. The University has gone some way towards meeting this action point but needs to address the omissions identified.

#### *6.4 The University must fully document its administrative policies, procedures and systems*

The University has provided a comprehensive set of administrative policies and procedures and has stated that these will be made available to staff and students on-line.

#### *7.5 The University should develop and publish an equality and diversity policy*

The University has developed an Equality, Diversity and Anti-Discrimination policy, which the University plans to make available on-line, together with its other policies and procedures. Relevant references to these areas are also made in its Code of Conduct and appraisal policies.

#### *8.10 The University must review the learning and teaching strategy to ensure that it aims to develop independent learning skills*

The University has provided its Philosophy of Learning Statement, which includes Independent Learning Guidelines. These clarify the importance it places on the development of independent learning. Module specifications indicate the total number of learning hours required to address the learning outcomes and this includes hours expected to be spent on independent learning. The University also seeks feedback from students on the extent to which their courses enabled them to develop independent learning skills. It plans, in 2017, to concentrate on these skills in its teacher training sessions.

#### *13.4 The University must develop a policy to avoid discrimination and publish a procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour*

The University has cited a number of its policies, which are aimed at promoting its values with regard to diversity and equality. These include the Equality, Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Policy. Relevant reference is also made in the IUG Code of Conduct.

#### *25.3 25.4 The University must implement an internal annual monitoring process which includes a requirement for reporting and monitoring at programme level*

The University has taken significant steps with regard to meeting this action. It has developed a new Annual Internal Programme Assessment Report, which is drawn up by the relevant department head. The reports will be presented at the faculty meeting in September 2017, with subsequent actions monitored and discussed at the annual strategy meeting held each January. This process will be implemented with effect from August 2017.

The template for the report requires detailed analysis of student data including performance. It does not, however, include reference to feedback from students, staff or from external examiners. Nor does it provide for the setting of specific targets and actions. Therefore, IUG could enhance its process through the inclusion of student and staff feedback and a requirement for the setting of specific targets and actions.

#### *25.6 The University must implement a periodic review process, through which the University regularly reviews its provision*

The University's response refers to the revalidation process, which does not constitute periodic review. It has, therefore, not met this action point.

#### *25.7 The University must ensure external academic input to the University's procedures for validation and approval, periodic review and assessment*

The University plans to involve externals in the validation and revalidation of its programmes. For assessment, it plans to implement an assessment scrutiny and moderation process. It has not responded appropriately to the action point concerning periodic review so, therefore, whilst IUG has met this action point with regard to validation, revalidation and assessment, it has not met the action point with regard to externality within a periodic review process.

### *25.8 The University must formally document its policies and procedures for academic quality management*

The University has provided a set of policies and procedures, which cover many aspects of the management of its provision. It has not, however, provided any policies and procedures directly related to academic quality management. For example, whilst the University has described its validation process in its response, this procedure is not formally articulated in a policy or procedure. Similarly, whilst the University has developed an annual monitoring process, this is not contained in a written policy or procedure.

The University does implement a robust process for the gathering and analysis of student feedback although this is in the absence of a written policy or procedure. Finally, the periodic review process, when it is developed, should also be contained in a written policy or procedure.

### *26.3 The University must ensure that students are routinely and fully informed of the outcomes of their feedback*

The University plans to formalise the feedback gained through its Annual Global Satisfaction Survey. This will be discussed by senior management who will produce a summary to be provided to staff and students via email. This process will be included in the online procedures repository by July 2017.

#### **3. Response to low priority action points in the previous report, including areas still to be addressed:**

There were no low priority action points in the previous report.

#### **4. Response to recommended areas for improvement in the previous report:**

The University has not provided any response to the recommendations in the previous report. Therefore, these have been taken forward in the recommended areas for improvement box below.

**PART C – CONCLUSION, INCLUDING ANY ACTIONS OR RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THIS INSPECTION OR STILL REQUIRING ATTENTION FROM THE PREVIOUS INSPECTION**

The University has made very detailed responses to the action points in the previous report. In some areas, it has made real progress, particularly with the number of new policies and procedures it has developed. It is not possible to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of these new policies and procedures, at this stage. Any future inspection should include such an assessment.

<b>ACTIONS STILL REQUIRED FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTION</b>	<b>Priority H/M/L</b>
5.1 The University must articulate its validation and approval process for its programmes. The process must include the criteria, which are to be met for programmes to be validated and include the use of external reference points and the requirements for external academic advisors	M
9.2 The University must provide evidence to demonstrate that module-specific assessment criteria are linked to the module outcomes	M
9.8 The University must provide evidence to demonstrate how it will implement internal scrutiny and moderation of assessment	M
25.6 The University must implement a periodic review process, through which the University regularly reviews its provision	M
25.7 The University must ensure that its periodic review process includes externality	M
25.8 The University must formally document its policies and procedures for academic quality management	M

<b>ACTIONS REQUIRED FROM THIS INSPECTION</b>	<b>Priority H/M/L</b>
None	

<b>RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT</b>
The University may wish to re-visit its new policies and procedures and ensure that, where relevant, they clearly indicate any specific processes which flow from the policy or procedure not being followed.
The University may wish to review its academic appraisal process to clarify the difference or relationship between the staff appraisal and faculty appraisal. It may also wish to consider how the outcomes of faculty peer review will be captured within the staff appraisal process and inform decisions regarding performance evaluation, future development needs and targets.
The University may wish to develop a formal policy on the acquisition of academic learning resources to ensure consistency.
Whilst recruitment and employment practices are sound, the University is recommended to develop fully documented policies and procedures to support the current practice.
The University may wish to review the practice of having the person who sets the examination as the sole invigilator.
The University may wish to articulate its requirements with regard to the modules which require external examination, its criteria for the appointment of external examiners, the size of assessment samples for external moderation and the permitted length of service of external examiners.
Continue to take all possible steps to fully ensure the security of its students, staff and visitors given the access arrangements for the complex, in which the University is based.
The University could enhance its annual monitoring process at programme level, through the inclusion of student and staff feedback and a requirement for the setting of specific targets and actions.