

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Independent Higher Education)

INSTITUTION: Independent Institute of Education (Pty) Ltd

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Sandton
2196 South Africa

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Dr Felicity Coughlan

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 2-3 April 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 23 May 2019

1. Background to the institution

The Independent Institute of Education (Pty) Limited (the IIE Pty. Ltd.) is a wholly owned subsidiary of ADvTECH Ltd, which is a publicly listed company in South Africa. ADvTECH Ltd focuses on primary, secondary and tertiary education and resourcing. The Support Office of The IIE Pty Ltd. is in Sandton, a district of north Johannesburg, South Africa.

The IIE Pty. Ltd. has two operating divisions. These are the Independent Institute of Education (the IIE/the Institution) which delivers further and higher education programmes as well as short courses in South Africa and the second division is AdvTech Schools. It is the IIE that is the subject of this inspection and is accredited by BAC. The Institution's vision is to be a leader in providing high quality career-focused higher education programmes. Consequently, all curricula have a career and vocational focus. The IIE offers qualifications from higher certificate to postgraduate level. It is the largest provider of private education in South Africa. The Director of The IIE (Pty) Ltd., who is the head of the IIE, is a member of the ADvTECH Ltd. group executive committee and is the Group Academic Director with responsibility for quality assurance in both operating divisions.

There is a government imperative in South Africa to widen access to higher education with as few barriers as possible. This obliges South African higher education institutions to expand access, improve quality and increase diversity in the post-schooling environment.

South African legislation and regulation requires registration of private higher education providers as companies and then registration as a private higher education institution by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The IIE was established in its current form as a single registered provider in 2005 and is registered with the DHET as a private provider of higher education and training. The IIE has approval to award its own degrees, diplomas and higher certificates for all its 66 higher education programmes, under authority from the Council for Higher Education (CHE), through its Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). It therefore confers its own awards and all its campuses are registered with the DHET.

All the qualifications are registered on the Higher Education Qualifications Sub Framework (HEQSF) of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of the South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The IIE is fully accredited both for its institutions and qualifications by the South African Council on Higher Education, the primary regulatory body in South Africa.

The IIE has four overall deliverables as its aims. It focuses on building student careers. Therefore, the institution's curricula are relevant to the modern world of work and it builds strong industry and academic partnerships that ensures and assures this relevance. The Institution also commits to student success which includes a focus on innovative and supportive teaching methodologies, a comprehensive and holistic developmental student support system and the provision of learning opportunities that meet the diverse needs of the student population. Finally, it aims to produce graduates who can and will contribute to the economy and society and who recognise their roles and responsibilities as citizens of a global community.

The IIE now delivers its programmes through three primary educational brands, which are The IIE Varsity College, The IIE Rosebank College and The IIE Vega. At the last inspection there were four brands. In 2018 the former Design School South Africa (DSSA) and The IIE Vega brands merged. It has 20 physical campuses. Each primary brand is located on a single campus or within multiple campuses in different cities across the country and focuses on a market segment within the overall strategy of the IIE. The primary brands market programmes separately to potential students.

The three brands each have a different focus. The IIE Vega delivers programmes in brand management and interior, graphic and fashion design. The IIE Varsity College and The IIE Rosebank College are concerned with academic tertiary programmes within the disciplines of commerce, humanities, information and communications technology and social sciences.

The IIE Varsity College and the IIE Rosebank College have differing programmes within these discipline areas and therefore market their programmes to different socio-economic groups within South Africa. The student ethnicity at the IIE Rosebank College brand varies significantly from those at other brands. Students at the IIE Rosebank College campuses are comprised almost entirely of what are described by the IIE, in line with South African equity legislation terms, as black and coloured students, while the race profile in the other brands is more varied. The students at the IIE Rosebank College also generally have limited financial resources when compared with students in the other brands. The IIE has five faculties through which its academic provision is organised, being Commerce, Humanities, Information and Communications Technology, Social Sciences and Education.

The IIE has a business management committee, which is made up of its Director, General Manager, Brand Managing Directors, the Systems and Innovation Manager, the Business Development Manager and the group Chief Information Officer. The IIE also has a separate academic governance structure with limited shared membership with the business management committee.

The IIE operates a federal academic model. Its key institution-wide strategy, policies, procedures and quality assurance processes are developed in collaboration with the academic teams on all of the campuses and in all the brands and disseminated to its campuses by the Central Academic Team (CAT). In addition, the CAT is responsible for the audit of policy and procedure implementation and undertakes the quality assurance function. The IIE senior management believes this model enables the campuses to fully focus on the teaching and learning experience of students.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The IIE offers a variety of higher education programmes, ranging from non-accredited short course provision to higher certificates, bachelor's degrees, honours degrees and a masters degree. At the time of the inspection, the IIE was not running any master's degree programmes. It should be noted that in the South African system, first degrees are mostly of three years' duration, with some professional degrees, which are of four years' duration. On completion of the first degree there is an option for students to undertake a one year bachelor honours degree, which is a postgraduate qualification that deepens and consolidates a student's knowledge and expertise in a given specialisation whilst preparing him or her for research orientated postgraduate studies. The honours degrees as well as Master's degree programmes are designated in South Africa as postgraduate.

Distance learning qualifications have been offered since 2013 and are now managed by each brand, the exception being the Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education which is managed by the CAT. Contact sessions, access to resources and student support are provided as necessary by the academic and operations teams on campuses or through the online platform. Some of the programmes offered by the IIE are generalist in nature and others are niched or focused. The majority of modules are shared across brands and qualifications, where appropriate.

Most of the programme offerings are brand specific, whether they are generalist or specialist. The academics based at the CAT, develop and package the teaching materials and assessments. In most cases the CAT will contract out the actual development of material to other IIE academic staff. In the case of specialist programmes, the staff in the brand, in which such programmes are located, own the modules in the programme that are specialist in nature, in that they take a strong lead in the teaching materials and assessment production. All administration of the academic processes related to teaching materials and assessments are centrally managed by the CAT.

All programmes are managed within the same set of policies and procedures and enable academic focus to be located at the main point of expertise in producing the programme and assessment content.

At the time of the inspection, there were 43,005 students enrolled on 66 full-time and part-time programmes and 39 short learning programmes across all the brands. A small minority of the total students study at Vega. The IIE's distance learning courses have a small minority of enrolments. The majority of students enrolled at the time of the inspection were female. Students under the age of 18 represent a very small minority of the total

student enrolment. Some of these students could be over 18 as it is not uncommon in South Africa, particularly in rural areas, for births not to be registered for two years or more. The large majority of The IIE's student population are South African. The international students, representing a small minority of the total student enrolments, mostly originate from countries that border South Africa. Most students enrol for courses in January at the beginning of the academic year.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over two days. Inspections were carried out at three campuses, two in Pietermaritzburg and one in Durban. A tour of each campus was provided. Meetings were held with senior staff from the CAT and interviews were held at campuses with senior academic staff responsible for teaching and learning, quality assurance and administration. Groups of students and academic staff were interviewed at each campus and three observations of teaching and learning were undertaken, one at each campus. A final session with senior staff was held to provide informal feedback on the inspection overall and clarify issues of detail. Extensive documentation, all very well presented, was provided prior to the inspection and was also available on site at the time of inspection. All staff cooperated fully with the inspection.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	10-15 March 2014
Interim	17-18 March 2016
Re-accreditation	19-26 May 2017

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. Significant changes since the last inspection

The major changes are that the DSSA and Vega brands have merged into a single brand and are now known as The IIE Vega. The IIE Rosebank College brand has increased its number of campuses with the opening of two new campuses in Pietermaritzburg and Bloemfontein.

Two senior academic positions have been added to the CAT. These are Dean of Postgraduate Studies, who has overall responsibility for postgraduate qualifications and research and the Dean of Academic Development and Support who is responsible for undergraduate qualifications and institution-wide quality of teaching and learning.

The academic management systems operated by the IIE have been refined since the last inspection. There is now a Student Hub which centrally manages student queries and an Academic Training Tracker which monitors all training provided to academic staff and is quality assured by the brands and the CAT. There is also a Student Intervention Tracker that records all interfaces with students excluding those undertaken in the normal course of college life, such as lectures and seminars. These interfaces are reviewed by the brands and the CAT. In addition, Module and Discipline Leaders have been appointed on each campus. Their function is to support lecturer development and foster student academic success.

2. Response to actions points in last report

There were no action points in the last report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

All staff should be encouraged to make use of the teaching materials, which are provided to lecturing staff and further support should be provided to lecturers whose teaching falls short of the high standards set.

All teaching and learning materials are centrally produced and issued by the CAT and lecturers are required to use them. These materials provide the curriculum, texts, the expected time to be spent on each aspect of the module, assignments and content for the online platform. The only element of the learning materials that the individual lecturer is responsible for producing is the Integrated Curriculum Engagement (ICE) tasks which are formative assessments contributing ten per cent to the students' final module mark. The ICE tasks are used by lecturers as an indicator of the learning needs of individual classes and students. It acts as a method of assessing the level of general student understanding of the module material.

The IIE has a number of facilities in place to help and support lecturers. These include policies, resource packs, peer review, guidelines for marking and moderation and the development and evaluation of teaching portfolios. The last two items on portfolio development and evaluation identify the minimum standards of teaching quality expected by the IIE and explain how excellence in teaching is measured in relation to the IIE's annual teaching awards. All lecturers are encouraged to compile a teaching portfolio in line with the IIE's teaching and learning ethos which are then submitted for the annual teaching awards. The impact of this is that lecturers across the IIE are able to present their teaching development activities and also share good practice.

The orientation programmes for new teaching staff include detail relating to the IIE's teaching and learning model. The training undertaken by teaching staff is recorded in the Academic Training Tracker. The programmes content and teaching delivery are closely monitored by the Programme Managers and Programme Coordinators, supported by the module and discipline leaders and through the lecturer's use of the online platform. This places much emphasis on the Programme Managers and Coordinators to pick up lapses in the quality of teaching delivery in individual cases.

A new initiative was introduced in 2018. The CAT's annual compliance exercise focused specifically on lecturer development for the purpose of supporting student success. Under this review, each campus was required to provide evidence as to how it addressed five minimum criteria. Each campus was provided with feedback on its submission and required to submit an improvement plan where appropriate. Evidence was reviewed of an improvement in student success rates which at least partly is due to this initiative. The focus of the CAT's compliance exercise will again be on teaching and learning in 2019.

Therefore, there is a highly organised and centrally controlled mechanism in place to ensure the consistency and quality of teaching coupled with an incentive strategy to encourage innovation and excellence in teaching across the IIE. The lecturers' engagement with these processes indicates that they are effective in ensuring consistency of delivery across the institution as evidenced by the good standard of teaching observed in the classroom observations undertaken during the inspection.

Consideration should be given to enhancing the module guides, in order to provide more detail to support the use of a variety of teaching methods, which are aimed at fully engaging all students in classes.

The IIE commented that implementing this recommendation would undermine its strategy to blend its teaching and learning and ensure that students gain access to what they need on its learning management system. The IIE has made clear that its curricula are highly structured and standardised and that its online platform provides a range of tasks and activities to support lecturers while enabling students to navigate through module content in a structured way. The online platform content is available offline on mobile phones and may also be accessed using the facilities on campus. The IIE feels that more printed material would be counter-productive given its focus on its learning management system. The IIE is also currently working on making this function available offline on desktops and laptops.

While recognising that the tuition model is highly structured, the IIE is constantly seeking innovative ways of delivering its curriculum and this is further addressed in response to the recommendation below relating to research. The IIE recognises that lecturers need to have a level of autonomy and be able to respond to the individual needs of differing groups of students. For this reason, the lecturers are able to use the ICE tasks as they feel appropriate. The lecturing staff interviewed stated that they felt they had sufficient autonomy to present their modules in their own way and do not feel restricted in using the centrally prepared material.

It is recommended that consideration be given to CAT staff having time set aside in their timetables to undertake some teaching to remain current with teaching methods.

This recommendation has been actioned in 2019 and will be implemented on a three year rotation. In 2018, the CAT staff had a voluntary option to carry out teaching duties. The voluntary uptake in 2018 was encouraging but felt to be insufficient and so in 2019 this is no longer optional with specific time being set aside on their timetables for teaching. The CAT intends to monitor this initiative to assess its impact on teaching and learning across the institution over its implementation period.

The IIE should continue to develop the research interests of its teaching staff, including research and scholarly activity in job descriptions and colloquia to disseminate research activities.

The IIE has continued to develop its research profile. In 2018, the appointment of a senior academic to oversee research led to her appointment as Dean of Postgraduate Studies. Her appointment resulted in the IIE applying for approval to run a doctoral programme to be offered through Vega and a number of other postgraduate programmes to complement those already offered. At the time of the inspection, the IIE was waiting for the outcome of this application.

In addition to providing funding and time for staff to present at conferences and to complete further study, the IIE continues to produce its own accredited journal on teaching and learning which includes research inspired articles from staff. This combined with the annual teaching and learning colloquium ensures that the IIE is highly supportive of its staff undertaking research particularly in teaching and learning and is nationally and internationally recognised for its development work in this field.

The IIE should consider obtaining feedback from students on the accuracy of published material after they have joined their course.

Visitors to the websites are able to comment on the accuracy of the published material at any time. Students are also able to raise questions and issues on the online platform for student queries. Focus groups and surveys are carried out with samples of new students and they are asked whether their expectations have been met. Interviews with students during the inspection confirmed this. This enables the IIE to obtain feedback on the fit between student expectations pre-enrolment based on marketing material provided to them and actual delivery.

Consideration should be given to providing students with information regarding any additional costs that they will incur in addition to fees, prior to enrolment.

Information about fees is available on the brands' websites. Textbook costs are also available through various websites. During the registration process, students are provided with information relating to fees, schedules of payment and additional costs. The registration process, which includes consultation with a student adviser, aims to ensure that students are made fully aware of all costs.

However, despite an overall reduction in costs of required texts of 25 per cent over the last three years, the IIE acknowledges that it could improve its provision of information on the cost of textbooks to students. From the 2020 academic year a specific document, labelled Additional Costs or similar, will be provided to students after they have applied when the first estimate of fees is presented to them.

It is recommended that consideration is given to providing advice and guidance to students before arrival and during the Orientation week on matters relating to health and safety, grievance procedures, code of conduct and the role of the BAC. The IIE should ensure that posters relating to these matters are displayed on every campus.

Information relating to these matters is presented in the student handbooks and displayed in every site. All students have access to the IIE's policies and procedures through the Student Portal and there are hard copies available in each campus library. Posters relating to BAC, emergency contact numbers and evacuation plans are displayed in each campus. Evidence from students interviewed confirmed that this information was covered in their orientation.

It is recommended that the application form seeks information from students on their requirements for special educational needs facilities.

While the need for special educational needs is not included in the application form, it is on the student registration form. It is considered that the registration form provides a firm basis on which student support can be planned. Though students may apply to a range of programmes, the precise programme they are located in can only be identified once they are registered. This enables targeted support to be provided as such mechanisms are structured within programmes. An effective administrative process is used, following the identification of a need for additional support, to enable the appropriate mechanisms to be agreed and put in place before the student attends classes.

The three month deadline for students to put in a complaint should be reviewed and consideration given to a longer deadline, for example 12 months, in order that students are not disadvantaged.

The IIE presented a good rationale as to why this deadline should not be extended including the need for speedy resolution and acting when memories of what occurred are not distorted by time. There are robust complaint mechanisms and an appeals process built in to policies and practise. Complaints can be logged in several ways including an appeal to the Registrar if the three month period has expired. Students interviewed during the inspection felt that a three month deadline for raising complaints was more than adequate.

The student handbooks should be made user friendly, across all brands.

The content in student handbooks is reviewed on an annual basis. In 2017, the student handbook in the Rosebank College brand changed to reduce the volume of information received by students at the beginning of the year. Additional information was released piecemeal but feedback indicated this led to confusion which in turn contributed to this recommendation being made in the last inspection report. In 2018 and 2019 Rosebank College reverted to providing a comprehensive handbook. The 2019 student feedback review process has been amended to include direct student feedback on the handbook. This is to ensure improved user friendliness in the handbook which will be issued in 2020.

Up to 2019, IIE Varsity College did not have a student handbook and provided important information through texts and e-mails. Starting in 2019, IIE Varsity College has issued a full student handbook which it is endeavouring to make as user friendly as possible. The handbook is interactive and available electronically, enabling easy access from various student platforms. It is interactive in design which enables students to access different sections to find what they are looking for speedily.

It is recommended that the International Student Handbook focuses on assisting students to integrate into the locality and campus in addition to the information it currently provides.

Guidelines providing information for international students are followed in the brand-specific handbooks. Information about the city where the campus is located, how to find a language school, accommodation, culture and dominant language in the locality is provided. This information is also available on the brands' websites. Each campus has a meet and greet session with international students where they are introduced to the Student Relationship Managers and are provided with information about the campus and surrounding areas. This, coupled with social activities, helps to enable international students to integrate into campus life and the locality.

The IIE should consider introducing a minimum English language requirement for international students to enrol on its courses.

The IIE has a language policy. All international students are required to obtain a degree exemption certificate from Universities South Africa (USAD) which provides them with eligibility to apply for entrance into a degree in South Africa. Those who cannot demonstrate English as a first or first additional language need to provide evidence through an internationally accepted English language test or a minimum acceptable score in the South African National Benchmark Test Academic and Quantitative Literacy test. There are a range of attainment levels in the tests which are required for entry to different programmes.

The IIE recognises that entry into its postgraduate programmes cannot necessarily rely on applicants having demonstrated their English language skills in their first degrees. Consequently, it is in the process of considering its enforcement of the stipulations around English language proficiency testing for its postgraduate applicants.

Student requests for library provision should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The IIE states that requests for library provision are considered on a case-by-case basis and that it is not aware of any reasonable requests that have been turned down. The IIE is a member of many inter-library and shared resource networks enabling it to provide a very wide source of academic and professional literature as would be expected of a higher education institution. Students interviewed during the inspection were very complimentary about the library provision with the exception of the opening hours that they consider could be extended in periods leading up to assessments or, where assessments are continuous.

Consideration should be given to extending the opening hours of libraries in periods leading up to assessments.

The main driver for this recommendation is to ensure that provision is made for students to be able to prepare for assessments which inevitably relates to the availability of Information Technology (IT) and printing facilities. Such provision is made available in computer laboratories which are opened to students in the weeks when

assignments are due in. Cyber centres are available to provide facilities for students to use computers and are Wi-Fi enabled.

The libraries, which tend to be smaller than those in public institutions, are open between 9 and 13 hours a day during the week and on Saturday mornings. The students interviewed stated that in some campuses it would be appropriate if the libraries were open longer in periods leading to assessment hand-in deadlines, particularly with reference to the use of printers.

It is recommended that a higher response rate with regard to the return of student feedback questionnaires is encouraged.

In 2018, a process to improve the response rate of student evaluation questionnaires was initiated. The format of the standard student questionnaires was revised making them shorter and simpler. In addition, the online platform was used to encourage an improvement in response rates by requiring students to complete the questionnaire in order to access their results. A consequence of this could have been the risk that students rushed through the questionnaires in order to access their results more quickly thus providing unhelpful or erroneous information. This risk is now mitigated by facilitating the completion of the questionnaires before the end of the semester but is still a pre-requisite for students to access their results.

The initiatives introduced have resulted in an improvement in response rates when compared with other tertiary institutions in South Africa.

The cohort statistics and brand results should be compared with targets and formally recorded with action plans established where the targets are not met.

A data analytics system known as Kitso provides information regarding student progress. Data is presented relative to targets and discussed at the annual Brand Results Committee (BRC). This meeting involves the CAT and brand management and reviews student performance relative to targets set for each level of study. Problem areas are identified and strategies discussed as to how such issues can be addressed. Action points are established and subsequently followed up at the later Teacher and Learner Committee meetings. The BRC compares results with targets and presents action plans which are followed up. This is the main way in which student performance is compared with targets set.

Discussion of student performance also takes place at the Programme Coordination Committees (PCC) which are held each semester and attended by the CAT and academic staff from the brands. The PCC meetings lead to action plans at the brand and CAT levels.

Good practice in the communication of the actions taken as a result of student feedback should be shared across all the brands.

Good practice is shared across all brands in the communication of actions taken as a result of student feedback. Such action is primarily related to the curriculum and delivered through the online platform. Nevertheless, the IIE acknowledges that evidence from its 2018 annual compliance exercise showed that response to student feedback relating to curriculum delivery or classroom practice varied across campuses. The need for consistency in quality of response to student feedback is recognised as an area that requires further work which is currently ongoing.

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

Risk management is carried out at various levels across the IIE. The CAT team meets weekly and addresses issues which might present future risks if they are not addressed. These tend to be of an operational nature, but not exclusively as adverse operational issues may lead in time to the IIE's reputation being put at risk. In addition, resolution of an operational issue in one area may lead to the risk of unsatisfactory performance in another. The CAT is, therefore, vigilant in quickly identifying possible operational risk areas so that any issues currently being experienced can be speedily addressed. This means that the CAT is able to provide mitigation against possible future risk.

In addition, the ADvTECH Group maintains a risk register. This is used to review potential risk areas in consideration of their impact, likelihood and cost of resolution to the organisation. The Group has contracts with organisations engaged with managing systems' risks. These organisations carry out various activities to mitigate the risk of unwanted system penetration.

Performance as a whole relates to the IIE's viability which is dependent on student success and future employability. Every three years a student tracking exercise is carried out to assess first employment destinations. There is strong emphasis, using electronic means, to assess and monitor student performance which is having the effect of providing reliable information which informs future programme development and methods of delivery.

4.2 Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Training interventions for Heads of Programmes have previously focused on assessments. In 2019, the focus remains on Heads of Programmes. The training addresses professional development through group discussions with the Teaching and Learning Manager, personal development and support and performance management.

The peer review policy includes classroom observation. It also includes student contact time, use of e-learning platforms, use of and additional requirements for teaching resource development and review of ICE tasks, adherence to marking standards and appropriate feedback to students on their performance. The peer review approach provides continuous review of standards of delivery and aims to develop excellence in teaching and consequently encourages lecturers to provide stronger support to students. Aligned to this is the Academic Training Tracker in which all training provided to academic staff is recorded and quality assured by the brands and the CAT.

Initiatives from the CAT have included reviewing the development of improved teaching and learning. This review has required the brands to provide evidence to support assertions of improvements including action plans and whether activity undertaken met expectations.

The student administration system is in the process of being replaced and will be rolled out in 2020 to 2021. The new online system is designed to provide information across multi-campus and brands and is expected to be more flexible to use and enable stronger integration of administrative systems enabling better information for decision making.

The staff appraisal system has not been modified but does now provide more information than at the time of the previous inspection. For example, student success rates in specific modules has enabled a sharper focus

on performance measures. This has led to a stronger focus, by the CAT, on the campus experience of lecturers and is linked to the CAT staff undertaking some teaching.

4.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The IIE allocates senior lecturers to teach on the Higher Certificate programmes. These programmes include an Introduction to Academic and Digital Literacy which replaced the previous module which focused solely on Academic Literacy. The new module is proving effective in introducing the students to academic writing, conventions and use of technology for higher education purposes. The result of this is that the IIE is increasing the success rate on its Higher Certificate programmes thus enabling graduates to progress to degree courses with a stronger chance of succeeding.

Short learning programmes are available to all students at no additional cost. The purpose of the Introduction to Scholarship programme is to equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for success in higher education particularly with regards to researching, compiling and completing assignments and other forms of assessment. The Introduction to Research is available to students entering the honours programme but who have not covered research skills in sufficient depth at undergraduate level. The effect of these programmes is that students are helped to prepare for the challenges they face in completing their target awards.

A concern is that the students in the IIE Rosebank College brand, which is the lowest fee brand, are less likely to finish in the minimum time expected or even at all due to failing some modules. While the reasons for this are not clear, action has been taken to address the issue with remedial modules offered over holidays and week-ends at a significantly reduced charge to the students to enable them to make a further attempt at passing, obviating the need for them to carry failures into the next level of study.

The IIE is endeavouring to present curricula which utilises local case studies, scenarios, brands and products as well as the use of local authored texts where possible. This helps to establish a familiarity to which core teaching, learning and assessment can be related.

The Student Information Tracker (SIT) enables good practice to be shared across different brands as teaching material can be uploaded. The IIE is encouraging lecturers to become curious about what is happening in other brands and campuses and the SIT system facilitates such enquiry.

The internal and external moderation process is robust and enables the CAT to maintain more effective control of the assessment process and standardise marking across modules.

4.4 Student Recruitment, Support, Guidance and Progression (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The IIE has moved away from a concentrated orientation at the beginning of the course believing that cramming information at that stage is not conducive to retention and application. While some information is still provided at the beginning of the course, sessions take place as the semesters progress, for example, analysing assignments when they are released. Other workshops on such items as time management are also provided but not at the beginning of the course. In this way, the IIE provides students with the opportunity to realise their potential by providing guidance in academic matters at the time they are most likely to need such support.

The IIE applies robust procedures for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) and Accreditation of Prior

Experiential Learning (APEL), referred to as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) involving a number of staff in reviewing applications although very few students are recruited in this way.

Students are very well supported on campus by dedicated administrative and support staff. Meetings with representative groups of students at each campus confirmed this view.

4.5 Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Each campus inspected was very clean and tidy with sufficient security in place for access that is provided by a specialist company.

The toilet facilities in each campus are suitable in number and cleanliness.

There is sufficient library stock and IT hardware to meet student needs.

The ventilation and air conditioning experienced during the inspection was satisfactory.

4.6 Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Almost all the IIE's external examiners are from South African public institutions and are generally complimentary on the programmes delivered. This provides reassurance to the IIE that its exit outcomes are of a comparable standard with mainstream South African higher education. The High Court in Pietermaritzburg ruled in late February 2019 that the IIE's LLB degree is equivalent to that offered at any public university in South Africa.

It was noticed by a Head of a Faculty that the completed questionnaires demonstrated that students were not always aware of how and why a particular module is an important part of the qualification. Each Head of Programme has now been asked to write a brief explanation on how all modules fit together and why they are important. These briefs are provided to all campuses and included on the student platform.

In 2018, 32 out of 33 IIE programmes were unconditionally re-accredited by the South African Higher Education Quality Committee. The process of re-approval stimulated thought in the IIE on what changes needed to be made to programmes in order to strengthen their validity. The impact of the successful re-approval enhanced the reputation of the IIE.

4.7 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS
STRENGTHS

A highly focused organisation that is clear on establishing strategies which contribute to delivering its aims. This results in an organisation which is well respected in delivering quality programmes.

A very highly motivated team of senior staff at the CAT and in the campuses provides enthusiasm to the lecturers who are working in an environment of continual improvement, the impact of which is the constant review of programmes and teaching delivery in order to reach even higher standards.

A strong ethos of research in teaching and learning in particular which is well supported by initiatives from the IIE. This results in teaching of a generally high quality which is informed by current research.

Well qualified administrative staff, technicians, counsellors and librarians who combine to provide a high level of technical, administrative and pastoral support to students.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

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

The IIE should review the improved provision of information about additional costs of study to be incurred by students to ensure its effectiveness.

It is recommended that the IIE ensures that all its applicants, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, have a sufficient level of English language proficiency in order to successfully undertake their courses.

It is recommended that the IIE reviews its policy on library opening times and considers extending these in periods leading up to assessments or, where assessments are continuous due to the variety of programmes offered on a particular campus.

The IIE should consider continuing to pursue ways of providing for greater consistency in the quality of the response to student feedback drawing from good practice in some of its campuses.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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