



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

INSTITUTION:	UK Varsity
ADDRESS:	Universal Square Suite 2 4 th Floor Building 3 Devonshire Street North Manchester
HEAD OF INSTITUTION:	Mr Ramanjeet Singh
ACCREDITATION STATUS:	Accredited
DATE OF INSPECTION:	22 September 2020
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:	Continued accreditation, 26 November 2020

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

UK Versity (the Institution) is a privately owned organisation that is based in a multi-occupancy building in Manchester. It offers accredited qualifications at Levels 3 to 7 in a wide range of subjects, including Accounting, Business, Computing, Digital Marketing, Healthcare, Human Resource Management, Teaching, and Travel and Tourism.

The Institution was established in 2015, with a mission to provide accessible, affordable, high-quality courses that meet the diverse needs of students and professionals.

The sole proprietor is also the Principal. He is supported by a Financial Director, Course Co-ordinators, Registrar, Administrative Officer and Quality Manager.

All the course delivery is now carried out online and the staff are working from home.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Institution offers a wide range of courses, including in Business and Management, Tourism and Hospitality Management, Health and Social Care, Teaching and Learning, Assessment, Internal Quality Assurance, Computing and Information Technology, Human Resource Management, Supply Chain Management, Accounting and Finance, and Administrative Management. The courses are offered at certificate and diploma levels, ranging from Level 3 to Level 7.

The Institution offers online and face-to-face learning. The vast majority of delivery is online. At the time of the inspection, only online courses were running. No face-to-face courses were taking place.

Students are recruited from a wide range of countries, including the United Kingdom (UK). At the time of the inspection, there were 79 students enrolled, most of whom were male, and all aged over 18. Students were from the UK, Europe, Nigeria, Ghana, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Pakistan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China and India.

The Institution offers continuous enrolment due to the mode of course delivery, and therefore the number of enrolled students can alter on a daily basis. There is no maximum capacity for online courses.

Prerequisites for enrolment are specified by the awarding bodies and are checked by suitably experienced staff during the application process. Where the applicant requires English language or mathematics at Level 2, they may prepare for and take the examination at the Institution, which is a Functional Skills test centre.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out remotely by one inspector over one day. Meetings were held with the Principal, the Quality Manager, administrators, tutors and students. A range of documentation was scrutinised, recorded lessons and a student induction were observed, and a virtual tour of the premises was made. The Institution was helpful in the organisation of the inspection and provided all requested documentation in a timely manner.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	21-23 May 2019

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements 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

Currently, all delivery is online and staff who would normally be based at the premises are working remotely.

2. Response to actions points in last report

There were no action points identified in the last inspection report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that the Institution uses formal documented feedback from staff and employers to ensure a central record is available.

All staff are encouraged to contribute feedback through a mobile telephone application on a designated office telephone. The log from this application constitutes a central record and is used effectively to inform the agendas for meetings. The Institution does not work with employers or receive feedback from them, so this part of the recommendation is not applicable.

It is recommended that the Institution ensures the improvement of the use of questioning techniques for a very few teachers, to improve student interaction and checks on learning.

The Institution has employed a range of strategies to make online lesson delivery more interactive and also to check on learning. Tutors have received training on questioning techniques. A recurrent issue is that the students either do not answer questions or only speak to confirm understanding. A specific session at which students are asked to explain key terminology is now included in sessions. This provides an effective check on learning.

Video clips and quizzes using voting software have been made available to stimulate discussion. Observed levels of interaction are noted in observation reports, together with missed opportunities for checking of learning. Nonetheless, the amount of student speaking time generally remains very low, and therefore, in most sessions, it is difficult to gauge the extent of learning. The implementation of this recommendation is, therefore, ongoing.

It is recommended that the nominated Safeguarding Officer achieves a Level 3 Safeguarding qualification.

The nominated Safeguarding Officer has achieved a Level 3 Safeguarding qualification.

It is recommended that the Institution conducts a formal risk assessment for risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

UK Versity has conducted a formal risk assessment and provided an appropriate record of the outcome. This includes suitable measures for mitigating any risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

It is recommended that the planned improvement in ventilation is delivered in a timely way.

The recommendation has been met through the installation of a ventilator in the small, interior tutorial room. Staff confirm that the room now provides a comfortable environment for teaching.

It is recommended that the planned private study area is implemented in a timely way, to ensure potential growth in student numbers is accommodated.

The planned expansion has not taken place, so the planned study area is yet to be developed.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Institution has a clear and appropriate management structure. Throughout the Institution, roles are clearly understood and channels of communication are very effective. Regular formal meetings ensure that strategic and operational matters are discussed, and targets are set and reviewed in a timely way.

The administration provision effectively meets the needs of the Institution, and roles are clearly defined and understood. Policies and procedures are properly documented and regularly updated. They are easy to access in staff and student handbooks and on the website.

The management information system is integrated into the online platform and used effectively to store all staff and student records. The Institution has an appropriate data protection policy, which is published on the website.

Rigorous application procedures ensure that responses to enquiries are prompt and applicants are placed on appropriate courses. Students confirm that they were thoroughly briefed on the nature and requirements of their course, and underwent a proper initial assessment, including detailed discussion of previous experience and their learning goals. They report that the course they enrolled on is well-matched to their needs.

The attendance policy is clear and recording of attendance is meticulous. As the live online teaching sessions are agreed individually with students, there are few absences. These are addressed promptly, which supports high retention rates.

Robust procedures are in place for an ongoing process of self-evaluation that draws upon all relevant sources of information. Procedures for gathering student feedback are outlined in the student handbook. Students are asked to give feedback at the end of their induction week to address any initial concerns, and again at the end of the course. They are also encouraged to provide feedback during the course. Forms for this purpose are available online. Students confirm that they have good relationships with tutors and managers and that their suggestions or requests for changes are promptly addressed.

Feedback to students on actions taken by the Institution is given directly to the person who raised the issue. This is appropriate in view of the mode of delivery. Data on student success and student feedback is gathered regularly and used to improve provision. Staff are provided with regular opportunities to give feedback. The Institution publishes an annual performance report, which has clearly identified strengths and areas for development. This informs a well-focused quality improvement plan. The process effectively supports the ongoing success of the Institution.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Principal is responsible for academic management. He is suitably experienced and carries out the role very effectively. Course provision is well-designed to meet the needs of those seeking to attain recognised professional qualifications through part-time study. The Institution works effectively with students and tutors to negotiate a schedule for classes when both are available. Students value the live online delivery and high level of flexibility in scheduling.

Teaching sessions are well-prepared by knowledgeable tutors. Presentation slides and resources are of high quality. Teaching refers closely to assessment criteria and includes helpful summaries and a focus on key terminology to consolidate learning. In a few sessions, there is little student participation, despite opportunities provided to ask questions.

A very effective system of lesson observations is in place, with clear feedback to tutors to support their development. Outcomes from observations inform staff training plans. Tutors confirm that the observation process and related training are helpful. They also value the peer observations they undertake as a means of further developing their skills.

Ample electronic resources are made available to reinforce and extend learning. Students are encouraged to contact tutors with any questions they may have outside the online sessions and receive prompt replies. Students greatly appreciate this one-to-one support. They confirm that they receive clear developmental feedback on draft assignments, including guidance on academic writing. Their progress is monitored effectively to allow for timely interventions where support is needed. This results in consistently high achievement rates on most courses.

4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

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

Comments

Two suitably experienced members of staff are available to deal with any welfare issues. Students confirm that they know whom to contact and that they receive prompt and helpful responses.

Students are made aware of the Information Technology (IT) requirements for the Institution's online platform prior to enrolment. Support is available to them throughout their course. They are provided with appropriate training in the functionality of the learning platform during induction. Course induction is thorough and enables students to settle quickly into their studies. Students are provided with effective study skills advice throughout their course. The Institution effectively facilitates interaction between students on the same course through the use of social media.

The Institution has a policy in place to avoid discrimination and a procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour. These are readily accessible from the website.

The Institution is committed to maintaining student safety and, while it only recruits adults, all staff have received training in safeguarding. Effective arrangements are in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Contractual terms and conditions of enrolment are fair and transparent. They are published on the website and in course information packs. The website also provides access to the Institution's complaints policy, which is clear and appropriate and makes reference to BAC's role as external adjudicator.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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

Comments

The Institution has secure tenure on its premises and does not make use of external premises.

The premises are of a high standard. They are secure and well maintained. They include a welcoming reception area, where administration staff are based, an office and a suitably equipped tutorial room, which can also be used for meetings. This is sufficient for the operation of the Institution as the vast majority of teaching takes place online, with staff working remotely.

The premises are located within a building that includes commercial food outlets, and where there are sufficient, regularly cleaned toilet facilities.

Appropriate general health and safety guidance is provided to students and staff through handbooks, and to all users of the premises through well-displayed signage.

The small number of students attending face-to-face sessions are able to access relevant online resources via tablets made available for that purpose.

Lockers are available to students and staff to store personal possessions securely. In addition, staff have lockable desk drawers.

The administration area is fit for purpose and well-equipped with computers, printers and telephones.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Rigorous initial assessment procedures ensure that students are enrolled on suitable courses.

High levels of support and well-focused feedback enable students to maximise their progress.

Flexible course delivery enables students to achieve their learning goals.

There are robust procedures for evaluating the performance of the Institution and planning for improvement.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High

Medium

Low

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

The Institution should continue to embed strategies for increasing the levels of student participation in online course sessions so that students become more involved in the learning process and tutors are able to check effectively that planned learning has taken place.

It is recommended that, if the expansion of the Institution goes ahead, the planned private study area is implemented in a timely way, to ensure that the potential growth in student numbers is appropriately accommodated.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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