



## BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

### Online, Distance and Blended Learning (ODBL) Re-accreditation Inspection

**NAME OF PROVIDER:** Western International College

**ADDRESS:** Suite 607  
68 Lombard Street  
London  
EC3V 9LJ

**HEAD OF PROVIDER:** Professor Cedric Bell

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 26 & 28 September 2020

**ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION:** Accredited

#### DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:

- Accreditation awarded for the full four-year period
- Probation accreditation
- Decision on accreditation deferred
- Award of accreditation refused

**DATE:** 26 November 2020

### 1. Background to the provider

Western International College Limited (WINC/the Provider) is a privately owned educational provider that offers a range of online courses. The Provider was established in London in May 2016 and is part of the KnowledgeGucate Group, which has been operating in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) since 2008. However, the scope of the inspection and BAC accreditation is limited to United Kingdom (UK) based provision only.

The Provider aims to help its learners gain world-respected qualifications and to enrich their lives in a variety of disciplines, including business management and accounting. The Provider targets markets worldwide, drawing learners primarily from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and Indian subcontinent.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is based in the UAE, is the sole proprietor. The day-to-day management of the Provider in London is delegated to the Director/Acting Principal, who reports directly to the CEO. A Vice-Principal manages operational matters and is supported by a Senior Administrator and the Business Operations Manager. Tutors and learner support staff are located in countries around the world where substantial learner numbers are present; including the United Kingdom, France and Greece.

The Provider moved to its current location in London in February 2020 after taking the strategic decision to focus its efforts on online learning only, rather than face-to-face delivery. The current office is within a shared block of serviced offices. The Provider has an office for four staff members and there is bookable space in the building for larger meetings. There are good transport links. The premises are not used by learners or tutors.

### 2. Brief description of the current provision

The Provider offers courses in business management and accounting ranging from Level 4 to Level 7. These are accredited by Awards for Training and Higher Education (ATHE). Accreditation was awarded in October 2016 and the programmes offered are all independent, self-study courses, with remote tutor support. ATHE supplies all summative assessments for these programmes.

The Provider's partner institution, Western International College UAE, has been accredited to run University of Bolton courses since 2008 as well as online courses since 2017. Since September 2019, the Provider has been included in this accreditation and currently offers a Bachelor of Science Honours (BSc Hons) degree, a Business Management top-up degree (BSc Hons), a Master of Business Administration (MBA) top-up degree, and a Master of Science (MSc) in Accountancy and Financial Management top-up degree.

The courses offered in conjunction with the University of Bolton are exclusively online, via live synchronous delivery. Each of the top-up courses is delivered over two semesters and has three intakes a year in September, January and May. Each semester lasts for an average of 15 weeks and constitutes 10 to 12 weeks of teaching, feedback and assessment submission. The programmes are contracted under franchised delivery, with all assessment methods, programme specifications and module specifications written by the University of Bolton.

Learners under 18 years of age are not accepted onto any of the Provider's courses. All courses are online or distance learning, with no provision for face-to-face delivery.

At the time of the inspection, there were 75 learners enrolled. The majority are male. All learners are aged over 18 years and come from a wide range of countries. Learners are enrolled continuously throughout the year. Detailed entry requirements are set for each course.

### 3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out over two days by one inspector making use of remote online communication methods. The inspector carried out discussions with the Director/Acting Principal, the Vice-Principal and the staff members responsible for student support and administration. Meetings with tutors and two groups of learners were also held. Online classes and an online tutorial were observed.

A wide range of documentation was also scrutinised. A meeting with the Senior Partnerships Manager from the University of Bolton, who is responsible for monitoring the quality of the Provider's franchised qualifications, also took place.

The Provider was very well prepared for the inspection and gave full co-operation to the inspector.

### 4. Inspection history

<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Full Accreditation	13 January 2017
Interim	12 July 2018
Supplementary	13 November 2018

## 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 provider.*

### INSPECTION AREA – MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

#### 1. The provider is effectively managed

- |     |   |   |                             |
|-----|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 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 provider and other senior managers are suitably qualified and/or 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 others working for the organisation, including those working remotely.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.4 | The provider has a written statement of its mission and goals which effectively guides its activities that is communicated to all stakeholders and is effectively implemented and regularly reviewed. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.5 | The provider has a written risk management strategy that includes financial planning and data breaches and is effectively implemented and regularly reviewed.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

#### Comments

The Provider is very well managed. A clear management structure, with well-defined and documented roles and responsibilities, is in place and fully understood by staff. The structure is appropriate for the size of the Provider and ensures that the organisation is well run and that the quality of education and the welfare of learners are secure.

Senior managers are very well qualified, highly experienced in the education sector and fully understand their areas of responsibility. They are very effective in carrying out all aspects of their role and work very well together for the benefit of the learners.

Communication between managers and the rest of the Provider's staff is good and includes a wide range of effective electronic methods so that those working remotely have easy access to managers and other relevant staff. Regular scheduled meetings are held where senior managers inform staff of any change in strategic direction and any operational issues. The meetings provide an opportunity for staff to raise any concerns that they might have.

A detailed written statement of the Provider's mission and goals is in place. It is successful in providing clear educational direction and ensuring that staff discharge their responsibilities in accordance with the aims of the Provider. As a result, a culture of caring for learners is successfully embedded throughout the whole organisation and this ensures that all decisions and actions take good account of the learner experience and meeting learners' needs.

An appropriate written risk management strategy, covering financial planning and data breaches, is in place and is effectively implemented. The strategy is regularly reviewed and is effective in ensuring that appropriate action is taken with regard to course development and learner welfare and in dealing with any potential data breaches.

**2. The administration of online, distance and blended learning is effective**

2.1	Administrators are suitably qualified and/or experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and duties and are effective in carrying them out.	<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 provider.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.3	The administrative support available to the management and learners is clearly defined, documented and understood.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.4	Administrative policies, procedures and systems are up-to-date, thorough, well-documented and effectively disseminated across the provider.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.5	The working environment is fit for purpose and suitably resourced for the effective administration of the provider.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.6	Data collection and collation systems are effective in supporting the administration of the provider, including the logging and monitoring of tutor and student interaction.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.7	Learner and tutors' personal records are sufficient detailed and regularly updated.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.8	The provider has a robust security system and policies in place for protecting the data of its learners and tutors.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

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

**Comments**

Administrative support is effective. The administrative team is appropriate in number to meet the needs of the Provider and provides a wide range of well-defined and documented support to managers and learners.

Administrators are suitably qualified and experienced and have appropriate formal job descriptions. The provision for administrators, in a suitably resourced serviced office building, meets the current needs of the Provider. As a result, the members of the administrative team understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities well. They are effective in supporting the day-to-day running of the Provider.

A comprehensive range of administrative policies, procedures and systems are in place and consistently implemented, updated and shared with staff and learners. Systems for the collection of data and its collation are well developed and support the administration of the Provider effectively. Systems for the logging and monitoring of tutor and learner interaction are well developed and effective.

Detailed personal records for learners and tutors are maintained and regularly updated. Appropriate policies and security systems ensure that learner and tutor information and data are well protected. These are regularly reviewed by senior managers.

**3. The provider employs appropriate staff**

3.1	There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced staff that include for self-employed staff a signed performance service level agreement.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
3.2	Appropriate checks, including experience and qualifications, are carried out before recruitment and accurate records are maintained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
3.3	The provider has a robust tutor recruitment system that includes a face-to-face interview using a suitable online communication platform.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
3.4	There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of all staff that incorporates regular monitoring of tutors' feedback to learners.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
3.5	All staff are appropriately supported in their continuing professional development.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

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

## Comments

Well-qualified and experienced staff are secured through an appropriate staff recruitment policy, including a signed performance service level agreement for those staff that are self-employed. Recruitment procedures are robust and include an appropriate online interview for teaching staff. All required recruitment checks are carried out in a timely manner and are appropriately recorded.

The process to validate references and qualifications is secure and an appropriate central record is maintained and monitored by senior staff. The recruitment of all teaching staff, who deliver the Provider's University of Bolton courses, is subject to agreement by the University.

An appropriate system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff is in place and includes a detailed assessment template to be completed at the time of the appraisal. Reviews identify any issues that may be of concern to the Provider or raised by the learners, including the quality of tutors' feedback to learners. However, the system is not effectively planned and as a result, not all staff have received a review of performance.

Staff are supported in their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through the internal circulation of webinars or internal training from partners and awarding institutions. A small number of teaching staff are also supported to achieve their Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) qualification through an arrangement with the University of Bolton.

#### 4. **Publicity material gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the online, distance and blended learning offered**

- |     |  |   |                             |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 4.1 | Text and images used in publicity materials provide an accurate depiction of the provider's facilities and the range and nature of the resources and services offered, including, where appropriate, location and administrative premises. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4.2 | Information on programmes is comprehensive and accurate.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4.3 | The provider's key policies are accessible through the website.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

## Comments

The website and other publicity material are clear and user friendly. They provide detailed information about the online courses offered by the Provider, how they will be delivered, and all costs involved. As a result, prospective learners are able to access accurate, relevant information to inform their study choices.

Text and images used in publicity material are accurate and provide a fair reflection of the range of courses currently on offer, as well as other relevant information about the Provider itself.

All relevant key policies are accessible through the Provider's website.

#### 5. **The provider has effective systems to monitor its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuous improvement**

- |     |  |   |                             |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 5.1 | There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the provider's performance.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5.2 | The provider has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from learners and other stakeholders, such as staff, partner providers and employers, on all aspects of the provider's provision. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5.3 | Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5.4 | The feedback is reviewed by the management and appropriate action is taken.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5.5 | There is a mechanism for reporting to the learners what the provider has done in response to their feedback.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

5.6	Reports are compiled at least annually, that include the results of the provider's performance reviews, an analysis of relevant data, including learner feedback, and action plans.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5.7	Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to senior management.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met     NA

**Comments**

Systems for monitoring and reviewing the Provider's performance are good. A comprehensive process of self-assessment and evaluation informs improvement planning effectively and ensures that the necessary resources are in place to meet the changing needs of the Provider. Detailed systems to ensure consistent assessment and the monitoring of learner progress are in place and closely follow awarding body or partnership requirements.

Comprehensive mechanisms for obtaining feedback from learners and other stakeholders are in place. Feedback is gained from learners and staff in a variety of formal and informal ways. It is effectively recorded and analysed on a regular basis. Student and Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) are held each semester and all learners are invited to attend and give feedback on the programme to date, normally six weeks into the term.

Each learner is sent a student satisfaction questionnaire at the end of each module that asks about the module content, resources and tutor. The results of these questionnaires feed into a module report, which is written by the tutor detailing their feedback on the module and anything they will change next term. This, together with learners' success rates, is reviewed by senior management, with appropriate action plans put in place to bring about improvement where necessary. Action plans are regularly reviewed by senior managers to ensure that the required actions have been completed successfully.

Actions instigated from learner feedback are shared with learners via an e-mail sent on the Provider's online platform.

**INSPECTION AREA – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

**6. Management of the programme is effective**

6.1	There is an effective manager or management team with experience of online, distance and blended learning who have responsibility for programme delivery and management of the teaching, learning and assessment team.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.2	The allocation of tutors to programmes provides a consistent learning experience and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.3	Realistic deadlines and schedules, including revision periods, are set and communicated well in advance to learners.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
6.4	Delivery methods and programme design ensure that the programme objectives and intended learning outcomes are effectively achieved.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.5	The programmes' content is regularly reviewed and reflects current knowledge and practice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.6	Programmes are designed in ways that allow learners to develop the knowledge and skills required for final examinations and/or assessments or that meet the needs of the learners and other stakeholders.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
6.7	The commissioning of individual course content and materials is managed effectively and is checked to ensure standardisation across the provision.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.8	Learners have appropriate access to staff for academic and/or learning support.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

Programme management, including oversight of teaching, learning and assessment, is highly effective. The Vice-Principal is well qualified and has appropriate experience of delivering online courses and provides effective oversight of the delivery and development of the curriculum. As a result, course content is regularly reviewed to ensure that it reflects current knowledge and practice well. In addition, all University of Bolton programmes are reviewed under the partnership agreement with the University to ensure that they fully meet the requirements of the qualifications.

The allocation of tutors to courses is effective in providing a consistent learning experience and is regularly monitored by the Provider to ensure consistency across the range of courses. Each module is only delivered by one tutor each semester, with a substitute tutor available to cover for sickness or absence of the assigned tutor.

The communication of assessment deadlines to learners is good. Dates of assessment and revision periods are clearly marked on each course academic calendar, which is agreed with the awarding institution before the start of the academic year. Learners are made aware of their deadlines through the module guides that are available at the start of the term. The module guide also includes full assessment details.

Delivery and assessment strategies are clearly linked to the achievement of defined learning outcomes. The programmes are designed by the awarding organisation, with the delivery content being created locally. All delivery methods are online and make effective use of virtual classroom software and resource portals. The software replicates the classroom environment, including whiteboards, break-out rooms, quizzes and provision for class discussions. Learners on University of Bolton courses are further supported by access to the University library and study skills support.

Learners have appropriate access to staff for academic and learning support. Learners can quickly contact staff formally or informally through the Provider's online communication platforms. Learners use these platforms regularly for formal guidance and informal questions.

**7. Tutors have an appropriate level of subject knowledge and pedagogic skill relevant to online, distance and blended learning**

7.1	Tutors are appropriately qualified and/or experienced.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7.2	Tutors demonstrate an understanding of the challenges and demands of online, distance and blended learning.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7.3	Tutors have an appropriate level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communication skills that allows them to deliver the programmes effectively.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7.4	Tutors are appropriately trained with respect to provider policies, learner needs, teaching and instructional approaches, and the use of the technology.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

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

**Comments**

Tutors are very well qualified, have good subject knowledge and are highly experienced in the delivery of online courses. They have a good understanding of the special challenges and demands of online learning and have well-developed communication and technology skills to enable them to deliver their programme of study successfully.

Tutors are fully aware of, and follow, the Provider's policies in relation to teaching methods and the development and use of learning materials. They adapt teaching materials and methods appropriately to meet their learners' needs. Tutors are highly skilled at keeping students focused on their work and their enthusiasm for their subject often inspires and motivates students to greater efforts.

**8. Tutors respond to the individual learning needs of learners**

8.1	The academic and/or professional backgrounds and particular support needs of learners are taken into account in the planning, design and delivery of the	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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programmes.

- |     |  |   |                             |
|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 8.2 | Learners are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills.                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8.3 | Tutors employ effective strategies to check learners' understanding of concepts and programme content. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

### Comments

The planning, design and delivery of the Provider's programmes are effective. Planning is detailed and takes into account the needs and backgrounds of learners. Tasks within lessons are designed to meet their varying abilities. The high expectations of tutors ensure that all learners are consistently challenged and well supported to meet their learning goals. As a result, tutors are successful in adapting lessons to meet individual learning needs and in challenging their learners effectively.

### 9. Learners receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, which are effectively monitored

- |      |   |   |                             |                             |
|------|---|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 9.1  | Programmes include a schedule of assessments, the procedures and criteria for which are available in writing and are provided in advance to learners and tutors.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 9.2  | Assessments maintain an appropriate focus on assessment criteria and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 9.3  | Ongoing assessments appropriately reflect the content and standards of any final assessments.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 9.4  | Learner assessment is guided by grading policies that are consistent and well-communicated with a robust, fair and effective marking system that ensures assessments are returned to learners in a timely manner. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 9.5  | Progress and assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of learners who are not making satisfactory progress and timely interventions take place if required.                                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 9.6  | Feedback is given to individual learners on a regular basis, tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |                             |
| 9.7  | Learners are made aware of how their progress relates to their target level of achievement.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 9.8  | Timely advice and guidance on alternative programmes are provided to learners who are judged to be making insufficient progress.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 9.9  | The provider takes effective steps to identify and discourage cheating and plagiarism and takes effective action.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 9.10 | Tutor and learner assessment submissions are monitored and appropriate action is taken if the timeliness of these falls below expectations.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |                             |

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

### Comments

Learner assessment, and feedback on their performance and progress, are highly developed and effectively monitored. Learners on ATHE programmes are provided with a schedule of deadlines, together with procedures and criteria for assessment at the beginning of their course. For University of Bolton learners, the deadlines are detailed in the academic calendar, with the assessment requirements and specific deadlines communicated in both the online class and through the module guides, which are released at the start of the semester.

The provision for learner assessments is well developed and maintains a clear focus on covering the set assessment criteria and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. For ATHE programmes, there are regular formative

assessments that clearly indicate the learning outcomes that are being measured and how they correspond to the final assessment submission. At the end of each module, this is cross-referenced to remind the learner of the sections related to each learning outcome and assessment requirements. For University of Bolton courses, the assessments are all final assessments, although the learners are given the briefs at the start of the module, with the class content linked to individual learning outcomes.

Learner assessment is regular and thorough. It accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses in the learners' progress and highlights areas for improvement. Feedback to learners is positive, encouraging and accurate. It clearly identifies areas for improvement. Grading policies are consistent and well communicated to learners. They are clear and fair and include an appropriate marking scheme. All work is marked within two weeks and moderated, at which point learners can receive feedback as to their performance and an indicative grade. Learner grades are only released after ratification by the Examination Board or upon external confirmation by the awarding organisation.

Comprehensive arrangements for monitoring learner progress are in place. The progress of each learner is very carefully tracked, allowing managers, tutors and learners themselves to monitor their progress effectively. Tutorials are held regularly and support learners effectively to review their progress against set targets. Appropriate advice and guidance are provided to learners who are judged to be making insufficient progress, including relevant financial costs or other study options if the learner cannot complete the programme.

Appropriate policies and procedures are effective in identifying and discouraging cheating and plagiarism. All assessments are submitted electronically and specialist computer software is used to check the authenticity of the content, with the Provider taking effective action where necessary.

#### 10. The provider offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies

This standard is judged to be:

Met     Partially Met     Not Met     NA

##### Comments

All courses offered by the Provider are accredited by recognised awarding bodies.

#### 11. There is a clear rationale for programmes leading to unaccredited or internal awards

11.1 There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the relevant national qualifications framework, for example, the RQF, CQFW or SCQF in the United Kingdom, and evidence that learners who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level.  Yes  No  NA

11.2 There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study, such as learners' destination data, employer feedback, student testimonials and success stories and post-course questionnaires.  Yes  No  NA

11.3 External moderators are involved in the assessment process.  Yes  No  NA

This standard is judged to be:

Met     Partially Met     Not Met     NA

##### Comments

**12. There are satisfactory procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment**

- |      |  |   |                             |  |
|------|--|---|-----------------------------|--|
| 12.1 | The provider complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of assessment security and administration.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA            |
| 12.2 | For internal awards, there are effective systems in place for assessment security and administration.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 12.3 | For internal awards, there are clear procedures for learners to appeal against their marks.  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes            | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 12.4 | There is an authentication process which enables the provider to verify that the learner who is registered on the programme is the same person who attends, completes the programme and receives any programme credit. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA            |

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met     NA

**Comments**

The vast majority of the assessment of the Provider's courses is by means other than examination and mainly comprise of tutor marked assignments. Where examinations are compulsory, they are invigilated by the Provider's staff at a location agreed with the awarding body.

All awarding body examination and assessment policies and procedures are followed. As a result, procedures to check learner authenticity are secure.

**INSPECTION AREA – LEARNER SUPPORT****13. The enrolment process is comprehensive, transparent and supportive to applicants**

- |      |  |   |                             |                             |
|------|--|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 13.1 | The provider ensures that the specific programmes on which learners are registered are likely to meet the learners' expectations and needs.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |                             |
| 13.2 | Applicants are provided with sufficient information to make an informed decision on the suitability of the programmes and their delivery methods and can discuss any concerns before enrolment.                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |                             |
| 13.3 | Enrolment and application documentation is easily accessible and simple to complete and submit.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |                             |
| 13.4 | The provider replies to all application enquiries in line with its appropriate target response times.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |                             |
| 13.5 | Entry requirements for each programme, including those relating to language ability where applicable, are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the programme descriptions read by prospective learners.     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 13.6 | The provider takes reasonable steps to ensure that learners accepted for programmes meet any enrolment requirements and that any claimed qualifications are verified.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 13.7 | The provider makes it clear to applicants that they are responsible for checking that they have the digital literacy and system requirements necessary to study on their chosen programme.                               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |                             |
| 13.8 | The provider has effective systems to identify learners who have special educational needs and disabilities requiring additional learning support or other any reasonable adjustments so that these can be put in place. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |                             |
| 13.9 | Learners apply for and are enrolled on programmes under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions, which include appropriate refund arrangements and a cooling-off period.                                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |                             |

**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

## Comments

A comprehensive enrolment process is in place and is effective in ensuring that the courses that learners enrol on meet their needs and expectations. Clear and appropriate entry criteria, including any prior language or educational requirements, are set for each course and are readily available on the Provider's website and in its promotional material. This information is used very effectively by the Provider and its agents to provide accurate and appropriate advice and guidance to prospective learners.

In addition, potential learners are able to e-mail the Provider with any questions and queries and all learners are contracted by a member of staff to discuss their level of commitment prior to accepting a place. Applicants are also made aware that they are responsible for checking that they have the digital literacy and system requirements necessary to study on their chosen programme. As a result, learners confirm that they were provided with timely and sufficient information to make an informed decision on the suitability of the programme that they were interested in before enrolment. Inspection findings confirm this view.

The qualifications claimed by learners are appropriately verified before they start their courses. Most are regulated qualifications and are checked via the awarding body. Where qualifications are of a local nature, the awarding body is contacted and the qualification award confirmed. In addition, the University of Bolton makes any non-standard admission decisions for its programmes.

Well-developed systems to identify learners who have special educational needs and disabilities are in place. These are used effectively to provide any additional learning support, including online one-to-one sessions, or to make other reasonable adjustments where necessary.

The Provider's contractual terms and conditions, including its refund policy, are fair and transparent and are available to learners on the website. In addition, the terms and conditions, as well as the learner contract, are e-mailed to them with the offer letter.

### 14. Services provided meet the reasonable needs of learners

14.1	Staff are available to assist learners to resolve issues of a general and technical nature and all enquiries from learners are handled promptly and sympathetically.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
14.2	The provider supports and encourages peer interaction through a variety of channels, including social media and virtual learning environment platforms.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
14.3	Staff monitor the online activity of learners and tutors and take action promptly if there are concerns about cyberbullying or other online risks to learners.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
14.4	Learners have access to a fair written complaints procedure, of which they are informed at the start of the programme.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
14.5	Learners are advised of BAC's complaints procedure.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
14.6	Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place for learners under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults, which are regularly reviewed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
14.7	A suitable policy and effective arrangements are in place to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

This standard is judged to be:

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

## Comments

The services provided by the Provider to meet the needs of learners are good. Named staff are available to deal with and resolve a wide range of general and technical issues. In addition, learners can receive direct support from the Provider on the Provider's online platform if they have issues with the software and their connectivity. University of Bolton learners can also contact the University's technical support team if there are issues with their access.

A wide range of media and virtual learning platforms are available to learners. These platforms support and encourage peer interaction effectively. Dedicated online groups for each cohort allow learners to interact with each other. A tutor monitors learner interaction and provides help and guidance if needed. This allows for immediate responses to be made to questions and works well for learners in a variety of time zones. Managers regularly monitor the online activity of learners and staff and take all necessary action if there are any concerns regarding risks to learners.

A clear and fair complaints procedure is in place and is available to all learners. A link to the BAC complaints procedures is also provided on the Provider's online platform and highlighted during learner induction. However, during meetings with learners, it was apparent that the vast majority were not aware of the complaints policy.

A suitable policy and effective arrangements are in place to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Appropriate risk assessments are in place and staff have undertaken relevant training.

#### 15. Programme materials are appropriate to the medium of delivery and are effective

15.1	Programme designers make effective use of appropriate teaching and learning resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
15.2	Programme materials are designed for a specific and clearly stated level of study and include appropriate support material.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
15.3	Programme materials are appropriately presented and sufficiently comprehensive to enable learners to achieve the programme objectives.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
15.4	Programme materials are regularly reviewed and revised to ensure that they are accurate and reflect current knowledge and practice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
15.5	Instructions and guidance on how to study and how to use the learning materials are made available to assist learners to learn effectively.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be:

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

#### Comments

Programme materials are appropriate for, and effectively support the delivery of, the online and distance learning courses. All programmes of study are designed by the awarding bodies and make use of a wide range of appropriate teaching and learning methods to engage learners and enable them to achieve the set learning objectives.

Course materials are of a high quality and are designed for each module in conjunction with the specifications provided by the awarding body. Materials are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are accurate and reflect current knowledge. In the case of the University of Bolton courses, the materials are checked at programme validation, and are updated annually by tutors.

Comprehensive instructions and guidance on how to study and how to use the learning materials are available for each module. In addition, learners receive an online induction as well as personal tutoring within their first few weeks to assist with their orientation of the online resources. The University of Bolton also provides guidance on how to access its resources, including pre-recorded support videos. As a result, learners report high levels of satisfaction with their course materials and the support that they receive in using them.

#### 16. The technology used to deliver the programmes is fit for purpose and effective

16.1	The provider uses appropriate and accessible technology to optimise the interaction between the provider and the learner.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
16.2	The provider ensures that the materials and learning resources can be easily accessed by learners and checks this regularly.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
16.3	The provider has access to the services of an experienced technical support provider that ensures systems are operative at all times and provides appropriate support to tutors and staff working remotely.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

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**This standard is judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

The technology used to deliver the Provider's programmes is fit for purpose and effective in supporting learning. The Provider's online learning platform was chosen for its flexibility of access as well as the low bandwidth requirement. As a result, learners from remote areas can access their learning effectively.

Access to the online learning platform is regularly monitored by the Provider to ensure consistent access for its learners. An experience technician is available to provide technical support if necessary. Learners studying on University of Bolton programmes have the additional support of the University's technical support team to assist with login problems or other technical issues with their systems. Learners report that access is good.

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated

Yes     No

## PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

*Numbering of action points aligns with that of the minimum standards*

### MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

#### Provider's strengths

A clear vision for the future development of the provision is in place and is understood and shared by the Provider's staff.

The management team is supported by an effective administrative team that ensures the smooth running of the Provider for the benefit of learners and staff.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

### TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

#### Provider's strengths

Tutors are very well qualified and experienced in their subject area and in the delivery of online and distance learning.

Highly effective systems are used to monitor learners' progress and provide additional support where necessary.

Course materials are of a high quality and effectively support learning.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

### LEARNER SUPPORT

#### Provider's strengths

A comprehensive induction helps learners to settle quickly into their course and to use the Provider's online platform to engage in their learning effectively.

Courses meet the learners' needs very well.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

### RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

To be reviewed at the next inspection

It is recommended that the Provider's current staff appraisal system is formalised to ensure that all staff are reviewed in a timely manner.

It is recommended that the BAC complaints policy, and instructions on how to access it from the Provider's website, are more clearly highlighted to learners.

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

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