



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Online, Distance & Blended Learning)

PROVIDER: International Institute of Management and Technical Studies

ADDRESS: Floors 9, 10 and 11
Annexe Wing
Pariseema Complex
CG Road
Ahmedabad
Gujarat
India 380009

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Dr Atul Pandya

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 7-8 January 2021

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 6 April 2021

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

The International Institute of Management and Technical Studies (IIMTS/the Provider) was first established in 2009 to deliver online programmes. In 2017, the Provider became a private limited company known as the Burly Institute of Global Education and Research Private Limited. The Burly Institute retained the name IIMTS as a brand name. The Provider offers predominantly online accredited and non-accredited certificates and diploma programmes in a range of areas including engineering, health and safety, and management.

The Provider is based in the centre of Ahmedabad, India and delivers learning from three floors in one building. An additional site in Surat, India is used solely for marketing, sales and customer support. The three floors in the main building are owned by the Provider. The office in Surat is in leased premises. A recent site has been opened in London in the United Kingdom (UK). This will be used to support the delivery of online learning in the UK.

The aim of the Provider is to offer high-quality online courses for working professionals who wish to upgrade their qualifications but do not have access to sabbatical leave.

Three Directors are owners of the Provider and are supported by the Principal, who is also the Academic Manager. Two of the Directors play an active role in setting the strategic direction of the organisation, including the development of key partnerships. The third Director is a silent partner. The Directors and the Principal are supported by an advisory board and a governing council of leading academics and corporate professionals. The membership of the advisory board includes employers and industry specialists.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Provider offers a range of accredited and non-accredited part-time online and face-to-face courses. The non-accredited face-to-face learning enhances and supports learners who are studying on the online programmes. At the time of the inspection, no face-to-face learning was being delivered.

The Provider works with a range of awarding bodies for accreditation purposes. Level 1 and Level 2 engineering courses are accredited by the Institute of Engineers, Ahmedabad. The University of Baroda, India offers additional accreditation of the programmes relating to talent management and industrial relations at Levels 1 and 2. The Confederation of Indian Industries accredits courses in logistics management at Levels 1 and 2. The programmes include online non-accredited certificates and diplomas in a wide range of engineering courses at Levels 3, 6 and 7. These programmes respond to particular industry requirements.

Courses in Professional Competency and Enhancement (PCE) are accredited by Gujarat University, India. PCE courses offer professional development to learners who are studying online and are based in Ahmedabad. The PCE courses are delivered face to face.

The Provider also offers a range of non-accredited engineering courses that have been developed to meet employer need and demand.

The online courses are delivered through live lectures, which are recorded. Learners are provided with learning materials and lecture notes. Face-to-face courses are delivered weekly and are offered as an enrichment activity for learners based in Ahmedabad.

At the time of the inspection, 1,131 learners were enrolled on online programmes. The learners are from India, Africa, Canada, Australia, Ghana, Europe, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. The majority of learners are male. All learners are aged over 18. Learners are enrolled on a continuous enrolment basis. Entry requirements include appropriate prior qualifications, English language attainment and industrial experience.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted online by one inspector over two half-days. Meetings were held with senior managers, managers, administrators, technicians, customer service staff, tutors and learners. An observation of online teaching and learning was conducted. A virtual video tour of the premises in India was carried out. A range of documentary evidence was made available for scrutiny. The organisation responded efficiently and promptly to all requests for information and co-operated extremely well during the inspection.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	17-19 September 2019
Supplementary	9 January 2020
Supplementary	14 October 2020

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.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

The Provider now has a formal governing council consisting of external academics and industry specialists. The council provides support and challenge to the Provider. It meets twice a year to scrutinise the performance of teaching, learning and achievement, quality assurance outcomes, learner satisfaction and course development. The council also contributes to the strategic direction of the Provider. This has resulted in additional partnerships that will contribute to the growth of the Provider's curriculum offer and the identification of additional markets for the programmes.

2. Response to action points in last report

5.6 The Provider must create more defined intended learning outcomes to provide a clear focus for delivery.

The development of defined learning outcomes has been carried out effectively. Course syllabus handbooks contain all learning outcomes for the course. The presentations used in the delivery of the courses include an outline of the learning outcomes at the beginning of each session.

5.10 The Provider must develop its grading policies and mark schemes to ensure fairness and consistency across all programmes.

The Provider has developed standardised policies and mark schemes across all programmes that ensure all learners are treated fairly and consistently and has improved the quality of individual feedback to learners. Specific mark schemes for the work-based project and case studies include reference to research skills and academic referencing.

6.3 The Provider must provide training opportunities for tutors to further develop pedagogic skills.

The Provider has identified a range of high-quality webinar training opportunities for the tutors that focus on how to develop the pedagogic skills required for the effective delivery of learning.

6.5 The Provider must ensure continuous training is available for tutors to drive continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

The Provider has implemented regular access to a comprehensive range of continuous training for tutors to drive improvement. This includes pedagogic, communication and technical skills.

13.1 The Provider must develop its technological platform to better optimise the interaction between tutors and learners to further enhance the learning experience.

The Provider has developed a highly effective technological platform that allows for very good interaction between tutors and learners.

16.3 The Provider must develop an effective mechanism to provide information to learners on actions taken in response to their feedback.

The Provider has developed an effective online mechanism to communicate to learners the actions taken in response to feedback. The mechanism is not yet fully operational.

18.3 The Provider must put in place appropriate systems, such as webcam technology, to verify the identity of the learner at the time of taking online examinations.

The Provider has developed an effective quality assurance process that requires an informal viva examination for all learners to verify written examination outcomes. This includes a set of specific oral questions that are linked to the programme of study that tests the learners' range of knowledge and skills.

24.5 The Provider must develop policies and procedures to address discrimination and abusive behaviour.

The Provider has developed a clear and comprehensive policy and set of procedures that effectively address any issues of discrimination and abusive behaviour. The enrolment policy includes a requirement for learners to sign a code of conduct that identifies expected behaviours and includes a set of staged procedures to address any complaints of abusive behaviour.

24.7 The Provider must develop effective arrangements to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

The Provider has not fully developed effective arrangements to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. There is an effective policy that identifies appropriate arrangements to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, including the implementation of risk assessment procedures and staff training. However, this has not been fully implemented.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider should include the advisory board and the University of Gujarat representatives on the organisational chart to better represent the key role of these stakeholders.

The Provider has developed an effective organisational chart that includes the advisory board and governing council, including the representatives from the University of Gujarat.

The Provider should formally record all observations of teaching and learning.

Tutors formally record the outcomes of observations in discussion with the observer. They are required to present any suggested improvements from observations at monthly review meetings. This provides a transparent record of suggested improvements and tutor responses to improve teaching and learning.

It is recommended that the Provider formally records external feedback at review meetings from employers and other external stakeholders.

Comprehensive minutes of review meetings include the recording of feedback from employers and other external stakeholders.

The Provider should include teaching presentations in standardisation activities.

The Provider has developed an effective standardised process to assure the quality of teaching presentations. This includes a set of criteria and regular monitoring.

The Provider should consider supporting tutors to use more online interactive materials to further enhance learning.

The Provider has identified and put in place comprehensive webinar training to support tutors effectively in using more online interactive materials.

It is recommended that the Provider captures course performance, including learner feedback, in order to facilitate trend analysis.

The Provider has developed an effective system to capture course performance and learner feedback. This will enable managers to access data that identifies trends in course performance for this academic year. However,

the Provider needs to continue the development of the systems for collating data to enable better access to trend data on course performance.

The Provider should consider formally recording feedback from staff and stakeholders.

Comprehensive minutes of meetings include recorded feedback from staff and stakeholders.

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 management of IIMTS is very effective. There is a comprehensive and detailed organisational chart that identifies all management staff and members of the governing council and advisory board. There are clear reporting lines and all managers understand their roles and responsibilities and those of the governing council and advisory board very well. The minutes of the annual and monthly review meetings demonstrate that managers are very effective in carrying out their responsibilities.

Senior managers have an excellent understanding of the requirements of online and blended learning, resulting in high levels of staff and learner satisfaction.

Various appropriate communication methods are used to ensure that staff are aware of the priorities and current developments. Regular staff meetings, e-mails and an internal messaging system are very effective in communicating with all staff. Staff report that they are well communicated with.

The administration of online learning is very effective. Administration staff are well qualified and experienced. Staff have individual targets that are regularly monitored. As a result, the staff understand their roles and responsibilities very well. The general administration of the organisation is very effective. A range of teams with clear roles and responsibilities provide administrative support. This results in the focused and efficient administration of the Provider.

An appropriate range of data is collected and centrally collated. This includes data relating to enrolment, attendance, learners' progress and examination results. Regular performance reports are created for managers to inform their decision-making. This results in effective improvement management that improves the learner experience.

Comprehensive learner and staff records are maintained and regularly updated to ensure the effective retention of robust and accurate information.

The administration of examinations is robust. Security arrangements, including the verification of learner identity and security passwords, ensure that examination outcomes are accurate.

Staff performance management is very effective. All staff have an annual appraisal and monthly review meetings with the Principal. This ensures that staff performance against key performance indicators is effectively monitored and appropriate support is provided where required. IIMTS's staff value highly the supportive approach to performance management.

The website is accurate and up to date so that learners are well informed about all aspects of the provision. Advertising information provides an accurate description of what is offered by the Provider. This ensures that learners can access accurate information about the Provision.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Achievement (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Academic management is very effective. An experienced and well-qualified manager is responsible for managing all aspects of teaching, learning and achievement. The recruitment of and support for the teaching staff are effective. Robust arrangements are in place to recruit teachers, and a mentoring system supports new members of staff effectively.

Learning outcomes are clearly defined in syllabus handbooks and delivery resources and, as a result, learners are well informed about the curriculum content.

Course reviews are very effective. Biannual reviews are completed by Directors, Academic Managers and members of the advisory board and governing council. Reviews are informed by learner end-of-module and end-of-year feedback. This results in the delivery of appropriate and industry-led courses that are aligned to the needs of employers.

The commissioning of course materials is effective. Course materials are evaluated at monthly review meetings and take into account feedback from learners in order to identify improvements. Annual reviews focus on the quality and currency of learning materials. Presentation materials are regularly monitored against a set of clear criteria.

An effective grading and marking policy has resulted in clear guidance being given to learners about why grades have been allocated. The identification of research skills is included in the marking and grading of work-based projects and case studies. Learners are highly satisfied with the impact of the grading and marking policy.

Tutors are very well qualified and experienced and have high levels of subject knowledge and skills. The tutors demonstrate a good understanding of the demands of online learning. Tutors have been trained to use a variety of effective and appropriate pedagogic skills.

The performance management of tutors is effective. Tutors are regularly appraised taking into account available information from observations, data from learner feedback, examination outcomes and enrolment data. Support is offered to improve performance.

Tutors have good access to continuous training. The training includes a range of webinars that focus on the continuous improvement of pedagogic, communication skills and technological skills as well as updated industry standard training provided by employers. Employers ensure that tutors are aware of any significant changes in industry standards that need to be included in curriculum content. The content of the webinars includes up-to-date practice in delivering effective online learning. Tutors are highly satisfied with their access to training opportunities.

Learners have good opportunities to develop independent learning skills. All learners have to complete a work-based project, and case studies are used effectively to develop additional independent research skills.

Assessment and feedback are effective. A clear schedule of examinations and project deadlines is available on the website. As a result, learners are well informed about the assessment dates and what is expected of them. The monitoring of learners' progress is effective. Customer service staff are assigned to individual learners and regularly monitor assessment outcomes and provide support intervention when necessary. This results in good levels of progress and achievement. Learners are highly satisfied with the level of support provided.

Four formal examinations provide assessment evidence against awarding body learning outcomes. The Provider does not use formative assessment as programmes are designed for summative examinations only. This meets the requirements of the awarding bodies.

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The learner enrolment process is very effective. The website identifies entry requirements that are appropriate and includes the prior qualifications, language level and industrial experience required for successful participation in IIMTS's courses. All evidence is appropriately verified prior to registration. Initial advice and guidance are provided at all stages of the enrolment process and throughout the programmes of study. This results in high levels of learner satisfaction with the application, enrolment and registration processes.

Terms and conditions are fair, transparent and accessible and are available on the website. This results in learners being well informed about the contractual requirements of their course of study.

English language skills are assessed on the programme by tutors. Additional English language support is offered if required. As a result, learners improve their confidence in written English and the quality of their written assessments.

General enquiries are responded to by the Customer Service Managers. Outside teaching hours, learners have access to an e-portal ticketing system that provides access to support from tutors, Customer Service Managers and Information Technology (IT) technicians. Effective support is provided and responses to technical issues are prompt and effective. This results in high levels of learner satisfaction with the support and communication provided by IIMTS.

Learners are actively encouraged to interact with their peers through a social media platform. Learners use this facility regularly so that they can share their learning experiences and receive support from their peers.

Customer Service Managers monitor learner progress. Intervention, when required, is prompt and effective. This results in learners making good progress and there are high levels of learner satisfaction.

A fair, comprehensive and transparent complaints policy is communicated to learners at induction and is available on the e-portal.

Course materials are appropriate and comprehensive and include e-books, research papers, tutor notes and presentations. Regular reviews of course materials ensure that information is current and up to date. The use of teaching aids and learning resources is appropriate. Learners have access to study materials, e-books, tutor notes, presentations and recorded lectures via the e-portal. Learners also have access to a range of video links that provide additional interactive support material.

The use of technology is effective in enhancing interaction between tutors and learners. Learners are highly satisfied with the choice of online learning platform.

A team of IT experts ensures that the Provider's systems are operational at all times. Support is available to staff, including those working remotely, and learners. Tutors and learners are very satisfied with the support offered and report limited system problems. Any system problems that do arise are dealt with promptly and effectively.

4.4 Management of Quality (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Management of the quality of the provision is very effective. Biannual and monthly reviews are used well to monitor all aspects of the Provider's performance against appropriate key performance indicators. This is supported by external oversight by the advisory board and governing council. Reviews result in effective

and detailed action plans that are regularly monitored and lead to improvements for the benefit of the learners.

A comprehensive range of data is used to inform biannual and monthly review meetings, including learner satisfaction, examination success rates, and enrolment and attendance data. Senior managers also monitor the individual performance of each learner. This results in the collation of a comprehensive range of information that is used well to inform decision-making. However, the Provider needs to continue the development of the systems for collating data to enable better access to trend data on course performance.

Effective monitoring of learners' progress results in prompt and effective intervention that supports learner progress and achievement.

Customer Service Managers meet regularly with learners to review progress. Information is obtained from the tutors to inform the conversations with learners about their academic progress and to identify any support needs. Monitoring of progress is enhanced by transparent, real-time deadlines on the e-portal, which identifies gaps in learners' submissions of work.

The Provider obtains regular individual feedback from learners through a ticketing system. The feedback is systematically recorded, monitored and responded to promptly. Feedback from staff and stakeholders is captured in minutes from meetings and taken into account in the action-planning.

Senior managers regularly review the individual learner feedback obtained and appropriate actions are taken in response. Any responses required are made in a timely fashion and reasons why actions cannot be taken as a result of the feedback are noted in the records of meetings.

Examination security is robust. Learners' eligibility to take examinations is rigorously monitored and verified. Secure passwords are provided to each learner, enabling access to online examinations. External awarding bodies' reports demonstrate that standards in examination security and administration are high. The Provider has developed a rigorous system of informal viva examinations to verify written examination outcomes for all learners.

4.5 Premises and Facilities – face-to-face component (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The premises in Ahmedabad are of a good standard. Access to the premises and all common and teaching areas is protected by closed-circuit television cameras. A lift is available for learners and staff.

The premises are in an adequate state of repair. There is good decoration, including motivational posters, and the premises are regularly cleaned.

Health and safety rules are clearly displayed on each floor. Appropriate information and signage are displayed inside and outside the premises.

Rooms are of a good size for the number of staff and learners. There is a suitable area to receive visitors. There are sufficient toilet facilities, which are very clean. Training rooms are appropriate for effective course delivery and tutors have access to an interactive whiteboard, laptop and projector. Training rooms have good-quality tables and chairs.

Learners have access to a suitable study area. This provides learners with a private area for study and access to additional resources. Staff have access to appropriate office space, a space for consuming food and drink and an area to make hot drinks.

There are a number of small meeting areas and a large meeting room. This provides sufficient space for one-to-one and staff meetings.

24.7 The Provider has not fully developed arrangements to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. The Provider has a comprehensive policy statement but has not yet implemented risk assessments or staff training.

4.6 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Very effective management has resulted in further improvements being made to the learners' experience.

Very effective, prompt support results in high levels of learner satisfaction and progress.

A very effective governance structure has resulted in the improvement of strategic and operational decision-making.

A comprehensive range of training opportunities for the tutors has improved their pedagogic, communication and technological skills to enhance and improve teaching and learning.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

24.7 The Provider must implement the policy arrangements that will protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, including risk assessment and staff training.

High Medium Low

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

The Provider should continue the development of the systems for collating data to enable better access to trend data on course performance.

The Provider should continue to fully implement the learner online feedback mechanism to ensure learners are informed of actions taken to their feedback.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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