



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM AND SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION CHANGE OF MANAGEMENT (Online, Distance & Blended Learning)

PROVIDER:	Globethics
ADDRESS:	Route de Ferney 150 CH-1211 Geneva 2 Switzerland
HEAD OF PROVIDER:	Professor Dr Fadi Daou
ACCREDITATION STATUS:	Accredited
DATE OF INSPECTION:	11--12 May 2023
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:	Continued accreditation, 28 September 2023

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Globethics (the Provider) is an international, non-profit organisation offering a range of short, online courses in applied ethics through its education department, the Academy. Globethics was founded in 2004. Delivery of courses commenced in 2019 with online courses and in-person trainer training.

Globethics's operations are run from its head office at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland. It has regional offices in Argentina, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Tunisia, and South Africa. The regional offices are not accredited by the British Accreditation Council (BAC).

In addition to its course provision, Globethics maintains an extensive, open-access online library of resources in applied ethics, education and religious studies and publishes research in these fields. It is active in developing partnerships to further its work around the world. These activities are not accredited by the BAC.

Globethics aims to embed ethics in higher education and strives for a world in which people, especially leaders, are educated in, informed by and act in accordance with ethical values and thus contribute to building sustainable, just and peaceful societies.

Globethics is led by an Executive Committee headed by the Executive Director, who is supported by the Deputy Executive Director and the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean heads the Academy, assisted by the Academic Office Manager, who is responsible for course co-ordination.

The Executive Committee reports to the Board of Foundation, which is chaired by the Founder and President. The governing structure includes the Academic Committee, the Ethics and Compliance Committee, the Finance Committee and an ad-hoc Recruitment Committee, which also reports to the Board of Foundation. The Academic Committee provides oversight of the Academy.

A new Executive Director has been appointed since the previous inspection.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Academy provides part-time, online courses in Cyber Ethics, Ethics in Higher Education for Administrative Professionals, Ethics in Higher Education for Teaching Professionals, Responsible Leadership, Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development, and Inter-religious Co-operation for Peace (IRCP). The IRCP course is delivered with a Religious, Cultural or Ethical Studies focus.

Courses run for between eight and 12 weeks. They are designed for professionals in various fields who wish to acquire specialised knowledge, competences and skills in applied ethics. These courses lead to internal awards that are currently being benchmarked to European higher education levels. Executive programmes comprising three of the short courses are also available.

All courses are delivered remotely by a pool of international experts. The majority of courses are delivered in English and offer a basic track with open, free enrolment, and a paid certificate track. One, Como incluir la ética en la formación universitaria, is offered in partnership with the Universidad de los Andes in Colombia and is delivered in Spanish.

At the time of the inspection, there were 40 learners enrolled on courses. Learners were mainly professionals from diverse domains and from a wide range of countries around the world. The largest nationality group was from India, followed by Ethiopia and United States of America, with smaller groups from South Africa, Nigeria, Dominican Republic, Angola and Norway. The majority of the learners were male, and all were over the age of 18 years. There is no specified limit on course capacity as delivery can be adapted to accommodate expansion in enrolments.

Courses are delivered during two annual semesters with intake dates in March or April and September or October. Learners enrolling on the certificate track are required to provide evidence of their highest level of academic qualification. The academic requirements are specified in the course information. There are no entry requirements beyond the necessary level of English for learners enrolling on the basic track.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted remotely by one inspector over two days. Meetings were held with the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, the Academic Dean and other managers. The inspector observed online teaching and met with groups of learners and instructors. The inspector reviewed various documents and information recorded on the Management Information System (MIS). The Provider responded promptly to all requests for information and co-operated fully with the inspection process.

4. Background to the supplementary inspection

The supplementary inspection was required because of a change of leadership. A new Executive Director was appointed in January 2023 following the retirement of the previous post holder.

5. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	22–24 March 2022

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 new Executive Director of Globethics took on the role in January 2023. He had previous professional involvement with the organisation and had contributed to the development of the new strategic plan for 2023–27, which was launched at the start of 2023. The Board of Foundation, headed by the President, and the committee structure of the Provider remain the same as they were at the time of the previous inspection. This has resulted in a smooth transition, and consequently, the high standard of provision at the Academy has been maintained.

In-person training for learners was suspended in spring 2020 and has not been resumed. The Academy retains the capacity to resume in-person training provision, but currently has no plans to do so.

The Academy expanded its online offer to a total of six programmes in the fields of education ethics, business and social ethics, and intercultural and inter-religious ethics.

An in-person Global Doctoral Summer School will be introduced in 2024 with a focus on engaging and supporting the development of emerging scholars in the field of ethics.

2. Response to action points in last report

3.2 The Provider must maintain accurate records of all the checks carried out prior to the appointment of instructors.

The Provider's recruitment policy has been updated to indicate the checks that are to be made at relevant stages of the recruitment process. The Human Resources (HR) department maintains a central record of all checks made prior to the appointment of instructors. The date of reference requests is recorded, as well as the date when the requested items are received. This allows for effective follow-up of delayed items.

6.2 The Academy must introduce a system of formal teaching observations.

An effective procedure for formal teaching observations has been established. All instructors and courses are observed each semester. Observations are carried out by the Academic Dean and recorded using a suitable report form. This includes a clear summary of the strengths and areas for improvement that have been identified. The report is shared with instructors to support their development. Instructors confirm that the process is helpful.

11.3 External moderators must be involved in the assessment process for a sample of certificate track learners.

The Academy has developed a grade moderation policy and procedure to ensure that a representative sample of final assignments for each course is reviewed by an external moderator. The document clearly outlines the procedure and is supported by forms for use by the moderator and the academic office to record the outcomes of moderation. A mandate agreement has been created to cover the process of external moderation, and a suitable moderator has been appointed. At the time of the inspection, one set of final assignments had been moderated. The process was effective. However, there were notable disparities between the grades awarded by the instructors and the moderator. This indicates a need for training for instructors and internal moderation prior to sampling by the external moderator to bring internal grading line in line with the expectations set by the stated level of the course.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider should consider developing the end-of-course evaluation form to cover all key aspects of the learner experience.

The Academy has introduced further questions to elicit feedback on the provision of information prior to commencement and during the course. This results in useful data to support improvements.

A strategy to collect more end-of-course evaluations should be implemented to better inform quality assurance.

A strategy has been implemented. The feedback form must be completed by learners in order to access the final elements of the course.

It is recommended that the marking of final assignments makes specific reference to the grade descriptors provided in the learner and instructor handbooks.

Instructors now make reference to the grade descriptors in their comments on the assessment form.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (supplementary inspection)

The numbers below refer to the standards as presented in the ODBL scheme document and main full inspection report

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 that effectively guides its activities and is communicated to all stakeholders and 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 that is effectively implemented and regularly reviewed. | <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

Management of Globethics is excellent. The management structure and lines of reporting are appropriately documented and illustrated in an up-to-date organisation chart, ensuring that these are understood throughout the organisation. The President and members of the Executive Committee are highly qualified and suitably experienced for their roles.

The roles and extent of authority of the Board of Foundation and the committees are clearly defined. There are efficient channels of communication between management and others within the organisation, including those in regional hubs on other continents. Communication is supported by virtual meetings and the use of digital platforms.

The mission and goals of Globethics are stated on its website and in its publications. These are successfully communicated to all stakeholders and inform the organisation's activities. Rigorous oversight by the President and Board of Foundation ensures that strategy is closely aligned with the values and mission of Globethics and that sufficient resources are made available to meet development objectives.

A comprehensive risk management strategy is in place, which includes financial planning and data breaches. Detailed risk assessments linked to appropriate mitigating actions are reviewed at least annually. This identifies and reduces risk effectively.

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, with policies in place for protecting the data of its participants and trainers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The administration of online learning is effective and is a strength of the Academy.

Administrators are well qualified and suitably experienced. They have a good understanding of their own responsibilities and how their roles contribute to the implementation of Globethics's mission. The Academy has a dedicated administrative staff for the co-ordination of course delivery and shares the other administrative services of Globethics.

Since the previous inspection, the Academy's administrative team has expanded with the addition of a part-time member of staff. This enables the team to deal effectively with increased enquiries and to support the requirements of courses and webinars and other project work. Administrative support is suitably defined in job descriptions and documented in an accurate organisation chart.

Administrative policies and procedures are comprehensive and regularly updated. They are available to staff through a shared drive on the Academy's Information Technology (IT) network.

The suite of offices constituting the Provider's premises is fit for purpose and provides a very good working environment. Offices are spacious and well equipped, and a meeting room of suitable size is available for regular team meetings. Larger meeting rooms and a conference hall within the Ecumenical Centre can be booked when required. Staff have access to a canteen within the Centre that provides suitable access to meals and refreshments.

Data collection and collation systems are very effective. Learner- and course-related data is held on the learning platform, and this allows for accurate tracking of learners' access to learning resources, attendance at synchronous teaching sessions, and monitoring of tutor and learner interaction. Appropriate personal records are maintained for instructors and learners. These are held securely and updated as necessary.

Appropriate data collection and privacy policies are published on the Provider's website and are effectively implemented. Robust security measures are in place to protect the data of learners and instructors. These are regularly reviewed for effectiveness. Globethics uses the services of external specialists to ensure the security of the IT system.

3. The provider employs appropriate staff

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| 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 on 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

Staff and freelance instructors are highly qualified and suitably experienced.

Rigorous staff recruitment policies and procedures are in place, resulting in the appointment of high-quality personnel throughout the organisation. Instructors are drawn from the already appointed pool of experts and work to an appropriate performance service level agreement, which forms part of the more extensive mandate document they are required to sign.

Appropriate checks are carried out prior to appointment, and accurate records are kept. All instructors are subject to a face-to-face interview process, which may include travel for an in-person meeting.

Globethics implements a well-developed system of performance review for all permanent staff, which takes place twice a year. Challenging targets are set in line with its strategic priorities, and progress towards targets is appropriately tracked through to completion. This supports achievement of the Provider's development goals effectively.

Instructor performance is regularly monitored by staff viewing synchronous or recorded sessions. Where possible, immediate informal feedback is given. The quality of the feedback provided to learners is regularly monitored by accessing records on the learning platform. Instructors confirm that these procedures support improvements in their teaching.

Good opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) are made available to staff and instructors. The HR department organises a monthly training session for permanent staff. This enables staff to understand the work of colleagues and ensures that matters affecting the whole organisation are appropriately disseminated.

Instructors attend an induction on issues relating to course delivery prior to the commencement of each course and are invited to participate in events such as conferences that are organised by Globethics for its wider community. Instructors are also supported to participate in external conferences relevant to their field of expertise.

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

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| 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

Publicity material is comprehensive, up to date and accurate.

The website is easy to navigate and provides detailed information on the nature and work of Globethics. There are accurate descriptions of the range of services and resources offered, including the online courses, the open-access e-library and publications. The location and contact details for the head office are provided, and profiles of the staff offer further insight into the global nature of the organisation.

Course information is clear and user friendly. Details are provided of the syllabus, mode of delivery and learning outcomes, as well as the resources available to learners. Short videos presented by instructors and staff are effective in communicating the aims and focus of the courses. There are also testimonies from previous learners who speak of the impact that their courses have had on them. This helps prospective applicants to make informed decisions.

The Provider's key policies are readily accessible through the website.

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

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| 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

Comments

The Academy has rigorous procedures in place for monitoring its own performance. The comprehensive quality assurance and enhancement manual documents a systematic process of annual review and self-evaluation. Feedback is gathered from a range of stakeholders and is analysed to identify areas for development. This process results in recommendations that are reported to the Academic Committee to inform improvement planning.

Instructors elicit feedback from learners during the synchronous course sessions, and learners are also encouraged to raise issues or make suggestions via the Academic Office Manager. Where possible, these are addressed during the course. Actions taken after the course are reported to learners by email. A significant change made as a result of learner feedback is the decision to migrate courses to a different learning platform. This will enable learners who have an unreliable internet signal to download their course materials when the signal is strong rather than struggling to complete all the tasks online.

Instructors complete an end-of-course survey, which contributes to the review completed by the team after each course. Feedback from stakeholders across the organisation is evaluated in team co-ordination meetings, and outcomes are reported at the meetings of the Executive Committee, the Academic Committee and the Board of Foundation.

The Provider employs effective procedures to evaluate its overall performance. Performance reports, supported by reference to all relevant data, are prepared for the Academic Committee, which meets twice each year. Action plans for the development of provision are submitted to the Academic Committee for approval. The Academic Committee monitors the work of the Academy and reviews its progress towards strategic targets, with outcomes reported to the Board of Foundation.

These processes ensure that leaders have effective oversight of the provision and its ongoing development.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Courses are well designed to meet the needs and interests of the target learners. Content is regularly updated, and the presentation of materials on the learning platform has been revised recently to make the independent learning tasks more attractive and user friendly. Synchronous teaching is very effective in tailoring content to learners' professional context. Courses are currently undergoing a process of benchmarking by an accredited European organisation to confirm their level, which will enhance their value as CPD.

Instructors are highly qualified and suitably skilled in online delivery. They are well supported in the synchronous sessions by course administrators, who deal effectively with any IT issues. Teaching is inclusive, with instructors demonstrating a good understanding of the differences in culture and work context of the wide range of learners. They ensure that all participate and are suitably challenged. Learners have access to all the resources required for their course and a wealth of additional resources through the Globethics e-library.

Learners are able to easily access academic support from their instructors via the learning platform. Courses are designed for learners with previous experience of higher education, often at the highest levels. Nonetheless, academic conventions vary between countries, and the Academy has identified a need to provide further support for the development of academic writing skills in the form of an additional course module.

Formative assessment and feedback are effective and promote progress. For the small minority of learners following the certification track, final assessment is through an extended written assignment.

4.3 Learner Support (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Learner support is effective, and every attempt is made to help learners overcome barriers to participation on their courses.

The information provided prior to enrolment is comprehensive. The Globethics website holds detailed course descriptions, and knowledgeable administrative staff respond promptly to any enquiries. The majority of applicants are already familiar with the work of Globethics through its links with the partner institutions. As a result, courses meet their expectations.

The required language level and the IT system requirements for successfully accessing the course are specified on the website. Completing an application via the website represents a suitable check on digital literacy. Academic requirements apply only to those taking the certification track and are also stated on the website.

The Academy provides an excellent virtual orientation session prior to the start of the course. This includes a clear explanation of how to use the learning platform and an introduction to key staff. This helps learners to settle quickly onto their course.

High levels of support continue to be available to learners throughout the course. The Academy logs all support requests to monitor what is requested and to improve provision. Learners confirm that support is easy to access and effective. Inspection findings confirm this view.

All required measures are in place to protect learners from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. These include an appropriate policy, a thorough risk assessment and staff training.

4.4 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Leadership is highly effective, ensuring that the educational aims of the Academy are met.

High-quality staff throughout Globethics support the effective delivery of courses.

Free access to engaging online materials and the resources of the extensive e-library promote learning for all, irrespective of income and location.

Comprehensive support is available before and throughout the course to promote learner success.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

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

In order to establish a rigorous process of final assessment, it is recommended that the Academy provide further training to instructors on grading assignments and introduces a stage of internal moderation of assessed assignments prior to external moderation as a means of standardising grading across the provision.

It is recommended that the Academy implement its plan to introduce an academic writing module to raise the quality of final assignments.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:

Dawn Hart

Lead Inspector

