

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

Independent Higher Education (IHE) Full Inspection

NAME OF INSTITUTION: AKTO Art and Design School

ADDRESS: 11A Evelpidon Street
Pedion Areos
Athens
Greece
11362

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Dr Stella Kyrimi

DATE OF INSPECTION: 31 October & 2–3 November 2022

ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION: Accredited

DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:

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

DATE: 18 May 2023

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

AKTO Art and Design School (AKTO/the Institution) is a privately owned institution based in Greece that offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in art and design validated by Middlesex University in the United Kingdom (UK). The Institution also awards its own certificates for vocational training courses, short courses and flexible modes of study.

AKTO was established in 1971 as a private provider of arts education in Greece. The ownership of the Institution changed in March 2020 from the National Bank of Greece Investment Branch (NBGI). It is now owned by the Vellios family, who were the original founders of the Institution.

The Institution has two campuses, one in central Athens and one in central Thessaloniki. The Athens campus provides facilities across seven floors. The Thessaloniki premises occupies two floors in a shared building.

The Institution aims to be the leading, private Greek art and design college, with an international presence, and to foster an innovative and transformative student experience.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a qualified Counselling Psychologist. She is supported by the Executive Academic Management Group, a Quality Assurance Officer and a senior leadership team, all of whom report to a Board of Directors. Academic staff are managed by programme leaders, who report to the undergraduate and postgraduate co-ordinators.

2. Brief description of the current provision

AKTO currently offers nine undergraduate and five postgraduate programmes validated by Middlesex University. These are in the disciplines of Graphic Design, Product Design, Architecture, Animation, Fine Art, Photography, Fashion, Sketch, Comics and Cartoons, and Gaming. AKTO also offers vocational training courses, short courses and flexible modes of study. British Accreditation Council (BAC) accreditation and this inspection relate only to AKTO's higher education programmes, which are delivered in person.

All programmes are delivered and assessed in the Greek language, with the exclusion of the Master's in Art and Education, for which the final project is submitted in English. All undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are offered in Athens. The majority of these programmes are also offered on the Thessaloniki campus and are subject to the same administrative and quality assurance procedures.

At the time of the inspection, 565 full-time and 89 part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students were enrolled across the two campuses. The current capacity for the Athens campus is just over 1,000, and for the Thessaloniki campus, just over 500 students. All students are over the age of 18, with the majority being over 21 years. The majority of students are female and are studying full time. Almost all students are from Greece. Students arriving from abroad are typically dual nationals and have family in Greece or Cyprus.

The Institution operates on an annual academic year enrolment basis. The academic year runs from September to August, with most students enrolling in September. Enrolment is on the basis of previous learning and subject experience. For validated programmes, the Institution follows Middlesex University's entry requirements.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was undertaken over three days by three inspectors, including a student inspector. The inspection was carried out using a hybrid methodology, with a mixture of inspection activities carried out both on site, by the Lead Inspector, and online. Inspectors held meetings with the CEO, the Chief Financial Officer, the Director of Operations and Human Resources, the Quality Assurance Officer and other senior leaders. Meetings were held

with students and with academic and administrative staff. Inspectors observed lessons and undertook a tour of both premises. A wide range of documentation was provided electronically for scrutiny. The Institution co-operated fully with inspectors before and during the inspection.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	18–19 January 2005
Interim	17 May 2006
Re-accreditation	1–2 November 2010
Re-accreditation	28–29 April 2014
Interim	26 February 2016
Re-accreditation	31 October and 1 November 2018
Interim and Supplementary	30 November 2020

PART B – JUDGEMENT AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

INSPECTION AREA – GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1. The institution is effectively and responsibly governed

1.1	The overall organisational structure, including the role and extent of the authority of any owners, directors or governing body, is clearly defined, documented and effectively communicated to stakeholders, including governors, management, staff and students.	☒ Yes ☐ No
1.2	There is an identified senior committee, with decision-making authority on academic matters, in order to protect the integrity of academic freedom.	☒ Yes ☐ No
1.3	The link between governance and management is clearly articulated and documented.	☒ Yes ☐ No
1.4	Internal stakeholders develop and implement policy through appropriate structures and processes while involving external stakeholders.	☒ Yes ☐ No
1.5	An explicit procedure for risk assessment is implemented, producing a risk assessment statement, which is regularly reviewed and updated.	☒ Yes ☐ No
1.6	Effective action is taken, by the governing body and senior managers, in response to the outcomes of regular risk assessments.	☒ Yes ☐ No
1.7	All relationships with other educational organisations are defined formally and are fully transparent with those organisations' requirements.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
1.8	There are clear channels of communication between the governing body, the executive, academic management, staff, including those working remotely, students and other stakeholders.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

AKTO has a very clear organisational structure that is clearly defined, documented and communicated via the staff handbook and organisation chart. Overall governance and effective oversight of the Institution are provided by the Board of Directors, which includes the CEO.

The Executive Academic Management Group is the senior committee with decision-making authority on academic matters. The group is made up of experienced academics who ensure that academic integrity is protected. There is a clear link between governance and management, which is properly articulated and documented in the staff handbook.

Internal and external stakeholders contribute to the development of AKTO's policies through an effective blend of formal and informal mechanisms, including the gathering and review of staff and student feedback and alumni liaison. Programme leaders maintain close and effective working relationships with a range of industry and employer representatives to ensure policies also reflect their needs.

Leaders and managers regularly consider a range of possible business risks, including legal, financial and academic risks, with effective oversight provided by the Board of Directors. Leaders take swift and appropriate action when needed in response to risks. A risk statement is provided in the annual budget statement, recognising a range of possible internal and external business risks. Senior leaders recognise the benefits of formalising the risk assessment process and are in the process of producing a formal risk register.

AKTO's relationships with other education organisations, such as Middlesex University, are formally defined and transparent.

Leaders and managers have implemented effective channels of communication between all stakeholders. An appropriate balance of formal and less formal methods ensures stakeholders are kept informed and up to date, for example through online communications, staff meetings and individual committees.

2. The institution has a clear and achievable strategy

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| 2.1 | The institution has a clear strategy for the development of its higher education provision, which is supported by appropriate implementation plans and financial management and takes into account the quality of the student experience. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 2.2 | There is provision for stakeholder input, including governors, management, staff and students, to inform the strategic direction of the institution. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 2.3 | The strategy is well communicated to all stakeholders within and outside the institution. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 2.4 | The governing body and senior management conduct a regular and systematic review of their own performance and the institution's overall performance, and each is measured against strategic targets. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

AKTO has a clear, five-year strategy that sets out three appropriate strategic goals supported by relevant implementation strategies. Leaders, managers and academic staff have the opportunity to inform the strategy through the committee and meeting structure. Students can contribute their views through annual student surveys and the student representative mechanism.

The strategy is communicated effectively internally through the meeting and committee structure. AKTO's strategy is communicated to external stakeholders, for example to Middlesex University at joint strategy days. Senior leaders have specific plans to share the strategy more widely outside the organisation via the website, which is to be redesigned and launched in early 2023.

An effective systematic review of performance is completed through the annual monitoring report produced for each undergraduate and postgraduate programme. Leaders then produce a detailed annual report that includes an analysis of key data and performance indicators. This enables leaders to review overall performance against key strategic targets effectively.

3. Financial management is open, honest and effective

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| 3.1 | The institution conducts its financial matters professionally, transparently and with appropriate probity. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 3.2 | The institution's finances are subject to regular independent external audit. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution conducts its financial matters professionally, transparently and with appropriate probity.

AKTO's finances are subject to regular independent external audits.

INSPECTION AREA – GENERAL AND ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

4. The institution is effectively managed

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| 4.1 | The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood by all stakeholder groups, including governors, management, staff and students. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 4.2 | There are clearly delineated responsibilities and reporting arrangements at institutional, faculty, departmental, programme and course levels. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |

4.3	There is an appropriate and effective committee structure, with appropriate reporting lines to inform management decision-making.	☒ Yes ☐ No
4.4	Committees have clear and appropriate terms of reference and meet regularly. The meetings are accurately recorded, with clear action-planning.	☒ Yes ☐ No
4.5	The institution has formal mechanisms to monitor the information it provides internally and externally and to make any enhancements deemed necessary to ensure that it is accurate and fit for purpose.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution has a clearly defined management structure that is well understood by different stakeholders. The structure is effectively documented in the staff handbooks, the organisation chart and job descriptions. There are clear reporting lines at all levels of the organisation.

AKTO has a range of relevant committees, such as the Executive Academic Committee, that meet regularly. Appropriate records are maintained and used by managers to inform decision-making.

Committees have appropriate terms of reference, meet regularly and have appropriate records of discussions and actions set.

Adequate arrangements are in place to monitor the accuracy and consistency of information provided internally and externally. Middlesex University also approves documentation related to validated courses to ensure its clarity and accuracy.

5. The institution is administered effectively

5.1	The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.2	The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood and appropriately focused to support its activities.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.3	Administrative policies, procedures and systems are well documented and disseminated effectively across the institution.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.4	Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.5	Data collection and collation systems are well documented, accurate and effectively disseminated.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.6	Comprehensive administrative records are organised and stored efficiently, easily accessed and used effectively.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.7	Students' records are sufficient, accurately maintained and up to date.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.8	Staff records are sufficient, accurately maintained and up to date.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.9	The institution has a robust security system and policies in place for protecting the data of its students and staff.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.10	The institution has processes through which the institution verifies that the student who registers on the programme is the same student who participates and completes and receives the credit.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.11	There are secure and efficient procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.12	There are effective procedures for internal and external moderation at pre- and post-assessment stages.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.13	The institution makes student records and transcripts available to its students in a timely manner.	☒ Yes ☐ No
5.14	There is a policy on the collection and refund of students' fees that is implemented effectively.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution has a suitable and well-structured administration support function that meets the needs of current staff and students. The administration support available is well defined and documented in clear handbooks and policy documents.

Policies and procedures are effectively and efficiently disseminated across the Institution. Managers use online systems and electronic storage effectively to share relevant guidance documents with permanent staff and visiting academics.

Classes are scheduled appropriately in suitable rooms, such as fine-art and photography studios, as well as computer rooms equipped with relevant design and illustration software. Staff can access timetable information easily through a dedicated mobile application.

The Institution has effective data-collection and collation systems that are accurate and well documented. The online student management system collects a range of relevant data, such as academic grades, attendance and personal details, which are used to ensure the Institution is administered effectively.

Administrative records are very well organised in an efficient and secure way. Hard-copy documents are stored securely in a logical and systematic format. Online records are well maintained and backed up on secure servers. Sufficient and up-to-date staff and student records are systematically maintained online and in hard copy. The Institution does not routinely collect and record an emergency contact for all students as a matter of course.

AKTO has relevant data-security systems in place, including due regard to data protection and associated legislation. There is a clear data-protection agreement in place with Middlesex University.

The Institution has effective processes in place to verify student identity. When enrolling, all students must provide appropriate evidence of their identity, which is checked and verified by administrators to ensure only registered students receive a final award. The Institution implements effective and secure procedures for the administration of formal assessments.

Appropriate external examiners are allocated to each programme and complete an effective sampling of assessments in the final certificating year. In addition, internal moderation is completed for all final-year modules and a selection of modules that form part of the undergraduate courses. Programme leaders also complete internal moderation sampling across all programmes to ensure that outcomes are valid and reliable across both campuses.

All assessments are reviewed and validated by the awarding partner before these are used for formal assessment. The same learning outcomes and assessment criteria are used across the Athens and Thessaloniki campuses to ensure consistency and comparability of standards.

Students can request an interim transcript at any time through their administration's single point of contact. Administrators produce transcripts from the online information management system and email a certified copy to students promptly.

The refund arrangements are clearly outlined to students on the website and the student registration form.

6. The institution employs and continues to support appropriately qualified and experienced staff

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| 6.1 | There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff, which is designed to ensure the safety of the students. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 6.2 | All staff are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying these out. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 6.3 | There are clear and appropriate job specifications for all staff. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 6.4 | There are effective procedures for the induction of all staff. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |

6.5	All staff are treated fairly and according to a published equality and diversity policy.	☒ Yes ☐ No
6.6	Staff have access to an appropriate complaints and appeals procedure.	☒ Yes ☐ No
6.7	Management monitors and reviews the performance of all staff through a clearly documented and transparent appraisal system that includes regular classroom observations of teaching staff.	☐ Yes ☒ No
6.8	The professional development needs of staff are identified through appraisal and other means, and measures are taken to support staff to address these and gain additional qualifications, where relevant.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☐ Met ☒ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Appropriate and effective staff recruitment procedures are well documented in the staff handbook. The effective implementation of these procedures ensures the safety of the students, who are all over the age of 18 and the recruitment of suitable and well qualified staff. References are sought for the non-academic staff. They are not routinely taken up for all the academic staff.

Staff are well qualified and experienced. Teachers are recruited for their vocational skills and expertise, and many are current practitioners in the arts and media sectors. Students value highly staff's professional credibility and their up-to-date knowledge of contemporary issues in the creative industries.

Job descriptions are in place for all staff. Staff confirm there are suitable and effective induction procedures in place. Academic staff receive an institutional induction and an induction to the programme from the programme leader. These arrangements help to ensure that staff understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying these out.

Staff confirm they are treated fairly and in line with the equal opportunities statement in the staff handbook. The handbook also outlines an appropriate staff complaints and grievance procedure.

Academic staff complete a detailed formal appraisal at the end of each semester that is formally documented. The appraisal process is well informed by observations of classroom practice carried out by the programme leaders. Lecturers complete a reflective self-assessment that looks back at achievements and developments over the previous semester, as well as identifying useful forward-looking objectives. Line managers complete a numerical evaluation that considers a range of performance factors, such as professionalism, teaching, communication, course preparation and punctuality. This helps to inform the setting of development targets, where appropriate.

6.7 Formal appraisals to review the performance of non-academic staff are not currently completed.

Academic staff appraisal documents also record the professional development needs of staff. Effective measures are taken to address any identified development needs of all the staff, such as staff development workshops, internal training and discounted fees on teacher-training programmes delivered by Middlesex University.

7. Academic management is effective

7.1	There are appropriate procedures for the proposal, design and validation of programmes of study that take account of the mission of the institution.	☒ Yes ☐ No
7.2	Intended learning outcomes for all programmes are clearly articulated, understood by students and are publicly available.	☒ Yes ☐ No
7.3	There are regularly scheduled and recorded meetings of academic staff where academic programmes are reviewed.	☒ Yes ☐ No
7.4	There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures for the acquisition of academic resources to support programmes.	☒ Yes ☐ No

7.5	Commissioning of course materials is managed effectively, and materials and the budget are checked to ensure standardisation and consistency across the provision.	☒ Yes ☐ No
7.6	Students are encouraged to take an active role in the development of the academic provision to ensure student-centred learning.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution has effective procedures for the proposal, design and validation of programmes of study, which are well described in the staff handbook. All provision is validated by Middlesex University and the university's own quality team helps to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed at each stage of the validation process.

The programme handbooks are comprehensive, clearly stating the intended learning outcomes. These are available publicly via the Institution's website.

Regular meetings of the Programme Team Council, the Executive Academic Management Group and programme teams ensure that all aspects of programme delivery and assessment are effectively reviewed.

There is a suitable resource acquisition policy and process that are clearly documented and made available to staff. The process includes the identification of resources needed for all new programmes. All resource requests are approved by the programme leaders, the Executive Academic Management Group and, ultimately, the CEO. These arrangements are effective in ensuring that all programmes are suitably resourced.

Lecturers are responsible for the development of their own teaching material. Programme leaders provide support to ensure the consistency and quality of the course materials that are produced and used. The Quality Assurance Officer provides very effective oversight to ensure that all programmes have suitable teaching plans and assessment materials in place.

The Institution has effective arrangements in place to collect student feedback to inform teaching and learning. Arrangements include a student representative system, for which students are members of the Board of Studies. Additionally, regular student surveys are used to gather data to support the development of new provision. Students complete an end-of-module survey to provide programme leaders with feedback on the teaching and learning methods used in each module. Together these provide robust and suitable mechanisms for students to have an active role in developing academic provision to ensure student-centred learning.

8. The institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable students for its courses

8.1	Entry requirements for each programme are set at an appropriate level and are clearly stated in the programme descriptions seen by prospective students.	☒ Yes ☐ No
8.2	Students are informed as to the necessary language requirements for entry on to programmes.	☒ Yes ☐ No
8.3	A formal application process ensures that students meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified.	☒ Yes ☐ No
8.4	All students' application enquiries are responded to promptly and appropriately.	☒ Yes ☐ No
8.5	Prospective students are properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the programme(s) in which they are interested and provided with advice on choosing their programme.	☒ Yes ☐ No
8.6	Students receive a proper initial assessment, which includes language ability, to confirm their capability to complete the programmes on which they are enrolling.	☒ Yes ☐ No
8.7	The institution makes it clear to applicants that they are responsible for checking that they have the skills and knowledge required to study on the chosen course.	☒ Yes ☐ No
8.8	The institution has a clear policy on the accreditation of prior learning and prior experiential learning, which is brought to the attention of prospective students.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

8.9 Any recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Entry criteria for each programme are set at an appropriate level. AKTO collaborates effectively with Middlesex University to establish suitable entry criteria for each programme. Entry requirements are communicated appropriately to prospective students via the Institution's website and in the programme specifications and programme handbooks.

Admissions officers also outline the requirements of each programme effectively when students make course enquiries. Students are appropriately informed of the language requirements for entry to all programmes. They must provide suitable evidence that their Greek language competency meets the set and published threshold.

A formal application process is in place that includes suitable arrangements to carry out the necessary checks on the academic qualifications claimed. Applicants to all postgraduate programmes, and those applying for advance standing, must complete an interview conducted by a programme leader to ensure their suitability for the course. Students confirmed to inspectors that their enquiries were dealt with promptly, and inspection findings confirm this.

Admissions officers are experienced at guiding and advising applicants on the nature and requirements of the programme in which they are interested. Where required, additional meetings are organised with programme leaders to ensure all prospective students receive appropriate advice on choosing their programme of study.

The Institution has effective initial assessment mechanisms in place to ensure that students have the capability to complete the programmes on which they enrol. Completion of the application process, participation in an interview where required and a review of the evidence of their language competency all ensure that managers enrol students with integrity to appropriate programmes that meet their aspirations and needs.

Clear and accessible information is available for applicants on the website and in programme brochures, which makes clear to students what they are required to submit to demonstrate they are eligible for the programme, and that this is their responsibility.

AKTO follows Middlesex University's policy for prior and experiential learning, through which applicants must demonstrate sufficient evidence that they have at least five years' experience in a related role. Applications are jointly assessed by the admissions and academic teams, with interviews conducted to ensure that experience is aligned well with the learning outcomes of the programme. The Executive Academic Management Group makes the final decision on the accreditation of prior learning and prior experiential learning based on a recommendation from the relevant programme leader. This ensures that the policy is effectively and consistently implemented. The policy is appropriately communicated to prospective students via the admissions department.

9. The institution encourages and supports its staff to undertake research and other forms of scholarship and to engage in other professional activities

9.1 The institution encourages academic staff to undertake research in relevant fields and to publish their findings. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

9.2 Academic staff are encouraged to engage in research and/or scholarship that informs their teaching. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

9.3 There is a fair and transparent procedure for staff to seek financial support for their research and other professional development activities. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

9.4 The institution provides time for staff to meet regularly to share and discuss current research activities and, if appropriate, invites external speakers. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

The academic staff are supported to engage in relevant research and scholarship activities. A range of academic staff development activities, including relevant seminars and workshops, is available to academic staff to support their professional updating.

As most academic staff are current practitioners in their field, many engage in real-world projects and contemporary studies that inform their teaching.

The Institution has a well-established process for academic staff to request support for professional development. Requests are initially taken to programme leaders, who will arrange the necessary resources. The staff handbook outlines a suitable policy that encourages and enables staff to gain additional qualifications, as well as to pursue personal research interests.

A well-designed programme of seminars and workshops provides regular opportunities for academic staff to discuss and disseminate their research or scholarly work.

10. Publicity material, both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the institution and its curriculum

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| 10.1 | Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 10.2 | Information on the programmes available, their assessment and progression is comprehensive, accurate, readily accessible and up to date. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 10.3 | There are effective procedures to update information on a regular basis to ensure its relevance and accuracy. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 10.4 | The information provided ensures students are well informed of the status of the qualifications offered, including the awarding body and level of award. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
| 10.5 | Students are informed of the full cost of all programmes, including costs of assessments, activities and any required materials. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Text and images used in the Institution's publicity material provide an accurate depiction of its location, premises, facilities, and the range and nature of resources and services offered. The website is attractive and informative and reflects the creative focus of AKTO's course provision.

The information provided about programmes and their assessment and progression is comprehensive, accurate, readily accessible and up to date. Useful summary information is provided on the website, with detailed information contained in programme handbooks.

Very effective procedures are in place to ensure information is updated regularly to ensure its relevance and accuracy. Senior managers must pre-approve marketing materials to ensure these are accurate and suitable. Managers work with Middlesex University colleagues to ensure that published information follows the university's strict information guidelines.

Students are informed effectively about the qualification status, awarding body, level of award, cost of programmes and other pertinent information through the website, programme brochures and during induction.

INSPECTION AREA – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

11. Academic staff are effective in facilitating student learning

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| 11.1 | Lecturers have the required subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skills and experience to teach both the course content and level of course to which they are allocated. | ☒ Yes ☐ No |
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11.2	The allocation of teaching staff to courses provides for a consistent learning experience, and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency.	☒ Yes ☐ No
11.3	The programmes and their constituent courses are delivered and assessed in ways that enable students to succeed by developing the knowledge and skills that will be required for final examinations or assessments.	☒ Yes ☐ No
11.4	Teaching sessions are appropriately informed by module descriptors and relate to defined intended learning outcomes.	☒ Yes ☐ No
11.5	Academic staff are effective in recognising individual learning needs and preferred learning styles and adapting their delivery to meet these.	☒ Yes ☐ No
11.6	Academic staff use a mixture of group and individual activities to encourage the active participation of all students and support their learning.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
11.7	Students are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills.	☒ Yes ☐ No
11.8	Students and academic staff have access to appropriate learning and study materials as well as other resources, and the institution encourages and supports their use.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution employs lecturers with appropriate subject knowledge, teaching and communication skills, and relevant and current vocational experience. Managers monitor the consistency of the learning experience effectively through the well-implemented and documented annual academic appraisal process, which includes teaching observations.

Lecturers are allocated to programmes based on their expertise and experience. Many of the lecturers are part time, allowing the Institution to employ individuals whose specific skills and experience meet the needs of the programme and the students. Lecturers use their expertise to plan and deliver practical and engaging sessions that meet the needs and interests of students. Lecturers effectively use real project briefs and work closely with industry representatives and clients to ensure students develop the skills and behaviours required by employers in the creative sectors.

Programme handbooks are clear about how learning outcomes relate to teaching and assessment. Teaching sessions are aligned well to clear module descriptors and learning outcomes for each validated programme. Module descriptors are supported by comprehensive assignment briefs, which provide clear guidance on how marks are allocated for each learning outcome.

Lecturers design their teaching effectively to meet the needs and preferences of students. For example, lecturers adapt their delivery to accommodate students' creative ideas and passions. Lecturers use creative and engaging individual tasks that allow students to express their ideas. They use open-ended group tasks that enable students to work collaboratively on simulated client briefs, reflecting the working practices of the creative sectors. Students benefit from small group sizes that allow lecturers to provide high levels of personalised support, feedback and guidance.

The curriculum is designed to develop students' autonomous approaches to becoming professionals in their chosen fields. For example, students are encouraged to develop their independent learning skills through projects and research tasks for which they can apply theory to practice.

A well-stocked reference library is available to all staff and students. Additionally, electronic books and other online resources are available. Suitable learning resources, such as studios and workshops, are available to both staff and students studying on site, both during timetabled sessions and outside these if requested.

12. **Assessment is fair and appropriate for the level and nature of the courses, and students receive timely and supportive feedback on their work**

12.1	Students are provided with an assessment schedule in which required coursework and revision periods are detailed in advance, with clear submission dates.	☒ Yes ☐ No
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12.2	Assessment strategies are relevant to the content and nature of the courses and focused on measuring students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes.	☒ Yes ☐ No
12.3	Assessment tasks are clearly written, indicating what students need to do to meet stipulated levels of achievement.	☒ Yes ☐ No
12.4	Students receive detailed and supportive verbal and written feedback on their assessments and overall performance and progress, which are effectively monitored.	☒ Yes ☐ No
12.5	The institution takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating, including plagiarism and other misdemeanours, and to penalise offenders.	☒ Yes ☐ No
12.6	There are clear policies and procedures for students to claim mitigating circumstances and to appeal against marks awarded.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Programme handbooks provide a clear schedule of assessments for each module during each semester. Details of the assessments are provided to students via comprehensive project briefs. All programmes have clearly scheduled formative assessment weeks during which students can complete coursework and revision.

Assignments are appropriate and well designed and provide students with clarity on the work to be completed. Assessments are suitably referenced to module descriptors outlined in the programme handbooks to ensure these are aligned with the intended learning outcomes.

Assessment tasks are clearly written and provide students with accurate guidance on the allocation of marks and performance indicators at different levels. This helps students to understand what they need to produce to achieve their qualification aims.

Students receive regular and helpful formal feedback during set formative assessment weeks. This is in addition to continuous feedback offered during lectures and seminars. Lecturers provide students with clear feedback on their final course assessments, which includes the marks given, as well as helpful comments on the quality of the submission. Together, these arrangements provide an effective and comprehensive system of feedback.

AKTO takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating and malpractice. Prevention of plagiarism and academic misconduct is governed by Middlesex University's regulations, which apply to all validated provision. Students are aware of these procedures through clear information in programme handbooks. Originality screening software is used for checking all textual submissions. For artefacts, such as created artworks, designs, photographs and garments, the lecturers' close relationship with the student, plus the use of an external examiner, provide effective mechanisms to detect plagiarism. The Institution has appropriate arrangements in place to penalise offenders if and when necessary.

Programme handbooks provide students with clear guidance on the policies and procedures for claiming mitigating circumstances and appealing assessment outcomes.

13. Student materials are appropriate to the medium of delivery and are effective

13.1	Course materials are designed for a specific and clearly stated level of study.	☒ Yes ☐ No
13.2	Course materials are appropriately presented and sufficiently comprehensive to enable students to achieve the programmes' objectives.	☒ Yes ☐ No
13.3	Course materials are accurate and reflect current knowledge and practice and are regularly reviewed and revised.	☒ Yes ☐ No
13.4	Programme designers make effective use of appropriate teaching aids and learning resources.	☒ Yes ☐ No
13.5	The institution makes effective provision for students to access all resources.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Course materials are effectively designed for specific and clearly stated levels of study, and this is secured through validation by Middlesex University. Updates to course materials are considered every six years as part of programme review and revalidation arrangements to ensure these remain current and fit for purpose.

Course materials are clear and suitably detailed to enable students to achieve the programme objectives. Assessment outcomes confirm that students are able meet the programme learning objectives, and external examiners comment positively about the use of course materials to support students' learning.

AKTO has invested significantly in ensuring that learning technologies are up to date and meet the needs of students. Computer studios are equipped with specialist design and gaming software to meet the course and assessment demands. Students benefit from a range of high-quality, practical workshops, art rooms and modern audio-visual facilities that support the development of their practical skills very well.

Observations of teaching confirm that programme designers and lecturers use a wide range of teaching aids and learning resources effectively, including specialist resources, to support a broad range of art and design programmes. In addition to course-specific materials, students can access study spaces in the library, as well as resources outside teaching hours by communicating with administrators.

INSPECTION AREA – STUDENT SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND PROGRESSION

14. Students receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances

14.1	There are appropriate staff members responsible for student welfare who are accessible to all students and available to provide advice and counselling.	☒ Yes ☐ No
14.2	Students are given an induction to the institution and their programme of study and guidance on the use of facilities such as the library and IT provision.	☒ Yes ☐ No
14.3	Students receive appropriate information on the pastoral support available to them, including for the provision of emergency support.	☒ Yes ☐ No
14.4	The institution has policies to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour.	☒ Yes ☐ No
14.5	Staff are available to assist students to resolve issues of a general and/or technological nature. All enquiries from students are handled promptly and sympathetically.	☒ Yes ☐ No
14.6	There are effective systems to communicate with students out of class hours.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
14.7	Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place and are regularly reviewed to keep all participants safe.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA
14.8	Effective arrangements are in place to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution has appropriate staff to support students' welfare needs. A counselling service has been implemented, which provides students with effective pastoral support. Programme co-ordinators support programme leaders in providing students with course-specific advice on request. Students confirmed to inspectors that they feel their pastoral and welfare needs are well met, and this view was confirmed by the inspection findings.

Students benefit from a suitable orientation to their programme that introduces them to the academic content and curriculum, explains how to avoid plagiarism and misconduct, and indicates the range of support services available. Induction information covers the use of the Institution's email and online systems and use of the library and relevant learning software. AKTO helps students access discounts when purchasing specialist software for their own devices.

The Institution provides comprehensive information on student support through its website and detailed student handbooks. Students can contact staff by email or through the use of an online messaging service out of office hours.

The Institution has suitable equality, diversity and equal opportunities policies in place. These cover procedures for dealing with online conduct and complaints and concerns relating to abusive behaviour.

Dedicated staff provide students with support to deal with any technical issues. Students are able to contact lecturers and support staff via email and students confirmed to inspectors that they receive timely responses to their enquiries, including those made out of office hours and over weekends. Inspection findings confirm this view.

The Institution has implemented effective arrangements to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. A suitable policy, risk assessment and relevant training ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping students safe from radicalisation.

15. Students receive appropriate academic support and guidance

15.1	Students have appropriate access to teaching staff outside teaching and learning sessions.	☒ Yes ☐ No
15.2	Students have access to appropriate support to enable the regular review of their academic progress.	☒ Yes ☐ No
15.3	Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of students who are not making satisfactory progress, and prompt intervention is made, where appropriate.	☒ Yes ☐ No
15.4	Academic support, advice and guidance on alternative programmes are provided to students who are judged not to be making sufficient progress and/or who wish to change their pattern of study.	☒ Yes ☐ No
15.5	Students have access to appropriate advice and guidance on careers and further study and any professional body exemptions that may be available.	☒ Yes ☐ No
15.6	The institution has a fair complaints procedure that includes an external adjudicator, for example, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) in the UK, and students are informed of how to submit a complaint.	☒ Yes ☐ No
15.7	Instructions and suggestions on how to study are made available to assist students to learn effectively and efficiently.	☒ Yes ☐ No
15.8	Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified so that appropriate support can be provided.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Students have appropriate access to teaching staff outside teaching and learning sessions through a range of electronic communication systems.

Students are well supported to review their own academic progress. Students receive their module grades and useful written feedback, which confirm their progress and attainment. Programme co-ordinators appropriately monitor the progress of individual students through online data-management systems. They provide timely and effective support when required for any students who are making slower than expected progress. Interventions can include a change of study mode, provision of extra classes or help to move to a more suitable programme of study if required.

The career and alumni office provides students with effective help to take their first steps in the job market. Careers support includes the promotion of companies seeking interns, development seminars about producing a curriculum vitae and interview skills support. All students, irrespective of their programme, are supported to develop a personal portfolio that showcases their skills and talents. The Institution is proactive in seeking out collaborative opportunities for previous students to work with current students to support their next steps into the industry.

The Institution has a clear and fair complaints policy in place that provides appropriate formal and informal stages of resolution, with expected timeframes for handling complaints. The policy includes explicit reference to the BAC complaints procedure. Students who have exhausted the AKTO procedure can seek external adjudication through the Middlesex University student complaints and grievance procedures.

The Institution and course induction processes provide students with appropriate guidance on how to study and learn effectively. Each study project has a clear timetable to help students to manage their time effectively. Additional guidance is also provided in online resource folders in relation to specific projects and lessons.

The application process provides students with clear opportunities to declare special educational needs and/or disabilities. Any declarations are passed to programme leaders and lecturers to ensure any reasonable adjustments are put in place quickly, where appropriate. Adjustments can include, for example, extra support from the lecturer, extra time in assessments or alternative assessment methods.

16. International students are provided with specific advice and assistance

16.1	Before their arrival, international students receive appropriate advice on travelling to and living in their chosen country of study.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
16.2	On arrival, international students receive an appropriate induction on issues specific to the local area.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
16.3	Information and advice that are specific to international students continue to be available throughout their time at the institution.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
16.4	Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
16.5	Where possible, students have access to speakers of their own first language.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

The Institution has very few international students as its programmes are taught in Greek. Students arriving from abroad are typically dual nationals and have family in Greece or Cyprus. Prospective international students receive appropriate advice and information about travel, their intended programme of study, the support service available and information on issues specific to the local area of study, where applicable. Advice and guidance are also provided on how to arrange accommodation near to campus.

Programme leaders, programme co-ordinators and the psychological centre staff provide effective, ongoing support for international students throughout their programme of study.

The Institution's policies enshrine its commitment to equality. Students' religious holidays and cultural differences are respected. Staff receive relevant training and seminars to help them understand the challenges faced by different student groups. The complaints policy takes account of inclusivity, and students may report any perceived breaches for investigation.

Overwhelmingly, the AKTO community speaks Greek, and teaching and support are provided through the medium of Greek.

17. Student attendance is measured and recorded regularly and effective remedial action taken where necessary

17.1	There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on required student attendance and punctuality.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
17.2	There are effective procedures and systems to enforce attendance and punctuality.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
17.3	Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality, at each session, are kept for all students.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
17.4	Data on attendance and punctuality is collated centrally and reviewed regularly, and absences are followed up promptly.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

A clear and specific policy on student attendance is published and shared with students and staff. High expectations for attendance are reinforced, and the policy sets out the maximum number of teaching hours that students are permitted to miss across a programme of study.

Students are clear about the implications of missed timetabled sessions. The Institution has effective procedures in place to enforce attendance and punctuality. Typically, a student who misses more than the maximum number of permitted absences will have their assessment grade reduced.

The Institution maintains accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality. An enhanced online attendance monitoring system enables staff to report on attendance at several levels. For example, staff can monitor individual student attendance, including whether the absence was authorised. Staff can also analyse absences by class, date and other parameters. This helps staff review and quickly follow up on persistent absence regularly.

18. Where residential accommodation is offered, it is fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised

18.1	Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard that is adequate for the needs of students.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
18.2	Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
18.3	A level of supervision is provided that is appropriate to the needs of students.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
18.4	Students are provided with advice on suitable private accommodation.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be:

☐ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☒ NA

Comments

19. The institution provides an appropriate social programme for students and information on activities in the locality

19.1	Students are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation in social events and other leisure activities that may be of interest.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
19.2	The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of students, and activities have been chosen with consideration of their affordability.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
19.3	Any activities organised by the institution are supervised by a responsible representative with suitable qualifications and/or experience.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
19.4	Students are encouraged to develop and participate in extramural activities and, when studying remotely, the activities include appropriate use of online forums or channels.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
19.5	The institution supports and encourages peer interaction through a variety of channels, e.g. social network forums and channels.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

Students are provided with a wide range of suitable extra- and co-curricular activities to extend their learning outside the classroom. For example, students have participated in a recent project exploring initiatives to improve Greek public spaces. The project saw students involved in all stages, from idea generation to initiation, implementation and co-ordination.

Students also benefit from opportunities to participate in fashion shows and design projects with local organisations. Beyond co-curricular activities, students have discounted access to local leisure facilities, museums, galleries and restaurants. Students have established walking and photography groups and are able to participate in overseas residential trips to other European cities.

Students confirmed to inspectors that the social programme reflects their needs and provides valuable opportunities to interact with their peers on different programmes. The activities organised by the Institution are supervised appropriately by staff.

Students are encouraged to develop and participate in extramural activities. Those students studying remotely are able to attend online cross-disciplinary lectures and occasional online exhibitions.

Student events are promoted through a variety of channels, including the AKTO website, by email and on social media platforms. A regular student newsletter also publicises events and activities that encourage and promote peer interactions.

INSPECTION AREA – PREMISES, FACILITIES AND LEARNING RESOURCES

20. The institution has secure possession of and access to its premises

20.1	The institution has secure tenure on its premises.	☒ Yes ☐ No
20.2	The institution has the legal right to use these premises for the delivery of higher education.	☒ Yes ☐ No
20.3	Where required, the institution has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution has secure tenure on its premises and the legal right to use the premises for higher education delivery. The premises are inspected, approved and licensed by the Greek Department of Education.

AKTO occasionally makes use of suitable external premises for exhibitions and graduation ceremonies.

21. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff

21.1	Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured.	☒ Yes ☐ No
21.2	The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness.	☒ Yes ☐ No
21.3	There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories) that are brought to the attention of students, staff and visitors.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
21.4	General guidance on health and safety is made available to students, staff and visitors.	☒ Yes ☐ No
21.5	There is adequate signage inside and outside the premises, and general information is displayed effectively.	☒ Yes ☐ No
21.6	There is adequate circulation space for the number of students and staff accommodated and a suitable area in which to receive visitors.	☒ Yes ☐ No
21.7	There are toilet and hand-washing facilities of an appropriate number and acceptable level of cleanliness.	☒ Yes ☐ No
21.8	There is adequate air conditioning, heating and ventilation in all rooms.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

Each campus is appropriately secured, restricted and monitored. Both premises are clean, modern and very well maintained. The Thessaloniki premises occupy two floors in a shared building. The Athens campus provides a wide range of teaching rooms, offices and practical facilities across seven floors.

All areas of both campuses are appropriately decorated and attractive and display a wide range of high-quality student art and project work.

General health and safety guidance is provided to students, staff and visitors through relevant signage and student and staff handbooks. In workshops and studios, additional safety guidance is displayed to remind students to use the appropriate personal protective equipment provided, such as gloves and eye protection, when using machinery and photography chemicals.

There is adequate signage inside and outside the premises to direct students, staff and visitors. The premises are spacious and provide adequate circulation for the current numbers of staff and students accommodated.

Washrooms are clean and sufficient in number. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning are adequate in all areas of both campuses.

22. Classrooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the programmes offered

22.1 Classrooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes (e.g. lectures, seminars, tutorials) allocated to them. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

22.2 Classrooms and/or any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, clinics, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level that allows for the effective delivery of each programme. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

22.3 There are facilities suitable for conducting assessments such as examinations. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

Teaching sessions are accommodated in suitable and well-equipped classrooms, studios, art rooms and workshops that are appropriate for the size and number of students allocated to them.

Students benefit from access to a range of specialist resources that support the development of their practical and creative skills, for example photography studios, green-screen rooms, computer laboratories and fine-art studios.

Each campus has suitable facilities for conducting formal assessments, including practical assessments.

23. There are appropriate additional facilities for students and staff

23.1 Students have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private individual study and group work. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

23.2 Academic staff have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and consultations with students. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

23.3 Students and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink, where appropriate. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

23.4 Students and staff have access to secure storage for personal possessions, where appropriate. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

23.5 There are individual offices or rooms in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings. ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

- 23.6 Administrative offices are adequate in size and suitably resourced for the effective administration of the institution. ☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Students on each campus benefit from access to individual and group working spaces, as well as facilities available in the library.

On both campuses the staff have access to dedicated staff workrooms to prepare lessons, mark work and consult with students. On the Athens campus, staff also use the library facilities to work and prepare lessons.

Students in Thessaloniki have suitable facilities for relaxation and for the consumption of food and drink. Students on the Athens campus have access to an outdoor area for socialising and consuming food and drink, which is appreciated by the students. However, there is no dedicated internal space, which would enhance the facilities offered.

Students at the Athens campus have access to lockers to store personal belongings, where necessary. Students have access to a supervised, shared storage space at the Thessaloniki campus, when required.

Staff, at both premises, have access to a good range of offices and rooms for holding small and large private meetings. Administrators have appropriate working spaces and offices.

24. The library is appropriately stocked and provides a fit-for-purpose learning resource for the student body

- | | | | |
|------|--|---|---|
| 24.1 | There is sufficient provision of learning materials, including books, journals and periodicals and online materials. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No |
| 24.2 | There are clear, systematic and effective means of ensuring the adequacy and currency of library stock to reflect staff and student needs. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No |
| 24.3 | The library has sufficient space for students' independent study and group working. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No ☐ NA |
| 24.4 | There is a well-organised lending policy. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No |
| 24.5 | The library is adequately staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced staff. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No ☐ NA |
| 24.6 | Library opening times are sufficient to encourage and support students' independent learning. | ☒ Yes | ☐ No ☐ NA |

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

Libraries at both the Athens and Thessaloniki campuses offer students a wide range of hard-copy books, journals and relevant magazines, monographs and industry periodicals related to classic and contemporary art, design and fashion.

Students benefit from access to a clear, well-organised online library catalogue to check available resources. A range of electronic books is also available to meet the needs of students studying online.

The book stock is professionally catalogued and referenced. Students can scan and copy relevant information when needed. Sufficient copies of key texts are always available to meet students' needs.

Library staff are suitably experienced and professionally qualified. They provide expert support and guidance to students and assist them with their research skills and use of information sources to support their assignment work. The library opening hours are sufficient to meet the needs of students attending classes at different times of the day.

25. The information technology resources are well managed, effective and provide a fit-for-purpose learning resource for the student body

25.1	There is appropriate technological access and sufficient connectivity to enable students to study flexibly.	☒ Yes ☐ No
25.2	Students have effective online resources that assist with their learning, optimise interaction between the institution and the student, and enhance instructional and educational services.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
25.3	There is provision of appropriate, up-to-date software and virtual learning environments that reflect the needs of the programmes.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
25.4	There is an effective means of ensuring the renewal of hardware and software to ensure efficiency and currency.	☒ Yes ☐ No
25.5	The institution has access to the services of an experienced Information Technology (IT) technician who can ensure that systems are operative at all times and provide support to students, academic staff, and students and staff working remotely.	☒ Yes ☐ No
25.6	The institution makes effective provision for students to access conventional and online resources.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution has a well-developed, comprehensive and reliable IT infrastructure that meets students' needs well, including those studying online and on campus.

Students have access to suitable and readily available online resources that support their studies well. Email communication is used effectively to provide students with information about their programme and wider institutional issues. Professional video-conferencing facilities are available to support online lectures and to structure and make available lecture notes and resources.

IT software is reviewed and updated on an annual basis, based on the requests of programme leaders. This ensures that students have reliable access to the specialist professional software they need to complete their modules and assessments.

The Institution has effective arrangements in place to ensure that hardware and software are reviewed and updated when necessary. IT managers provide effective oversight and have suitable plans in place to ensure that the IT infrastructure is reliable and effective in meeting the demands of students and staff.

Experienced IT technicians support staff and students effectively at all times to ensure that they have consistent access to IT services. Off-site and on-site access to resources is well managed. Reliable wireless internet services are available throughout each campus to support effective access to online resources and IT management systems.

INSPECTION AREA – QUALITY MANAGEMENT, ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

26. The institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary

26.1	The views of all stakeholders are canvassed and recorded regularly, considered objectively, analysed and evaluated thoroughly and, where necessary, appropriate action is taken.	☒ Yes ☐ No
26.2	Student feedback is obtained through appropriate, formal student representation mechanisms.	☒ Yes ☐ No
26.3	The institution has appropriate, formal feedback mechanisms to inform all stakeholders of any action taken as a result of their views.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution gathers feedback effectively from a wide range of stakeholders, including students, employers, alumni and faculty. Feedback is analysed and evaluated thoroughly to identify actions for improvement. The Academic Executive Committee and Board of Directors provide effective oversight to ensure that any actions are completed, where appropriate, to maintain the high standards of education and care provided.

Student feedback is obtained through appropriate, formal student representation mechanisms. Student representatives are elected by their peers and attend Board of Studies meetings to discuss the feedback they have received from other students with staff. The student representatives have access to support material from Middlesex University to help them understand their role.

Students are also encouraged to complete anonymous online feedback forms to provide managers with additional data relating to different aspects of the student experience. Survey completion rates are not as high as senior managers would like and in order to increase the breadth of the evidence used to make improvement changes.

The Institution provides feedback to students and other stakeholders of any action taken as a result of their feedback, for example in the renovation of the photography studio and improvements to computer hardware and software. Formal feedback mechanisms include newsletters, the website, video-conferencing facilities and email. The Board of Studies also plays a valuable role in cascading information and any actions taken as a result of the feedback submitted.

27. The institution has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance

27.1	All quality management policies and procedures are clearly documented and are brought to the attention of staff and, where appropriate, students and other stakeholders.	☒ Yes ☐ No
27.2	The institution's quality assurance policies and procedures appropriately inform its strategic management.	☒ Yes ☐ No
27.3	The principles of quality assurance are embedded throughout the institution to ensure a quality ethos.	☒ Yes ☐ No
27.4	The institution undertakes regular and systematic monitoring of its operations and reviews all aspects of its performance against clearly specified and appropriate performance indicators.	☒ Yes ☐ No
27.5	Management compiles regular reports that present the results of the institution's reviews and incorporate action plans.	☒ Yes ☐ No
27.6	Particular attention is paid to the quality of the student learning experience and to ensuring that there is fair treatment of all students.	☒ Yes ☐ No
27.7	The nominated course leader produces an end-of-session, end-of-semester or end-of-year course report that includes measures of student satisfaction, completion rates and achievement levels.	☒ Yes ☐ No
27.8	The nominated programme leader, drawing on reports from the constituent courses, produces an annual programme report, which includes analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, achievement levels, completion rates and progression to further study or employment.	☒ Yes ☐ No
27.9	Key performance indicators include an analysis of student outcomes in terms of year-on-year performance and highlight any significant variations.	☒ Yes ☐ No
27.10	General performance reports include an analysis of year-on-year data, including on student satisfaction, retention and achievement, staff performance (including research and other forms of scholarship) and a review of resourcing issues.	☒ Yes ☐ No
27.11	Review and revalidation of programmes on a regular basis involve external assessors as appropriate.	☒ Yes ☐ No
27.12	Institutional systems ensure the effective consideration of programme reports and that appropriate actions are incorporated into action-planning.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance. Quality management policies and procedures are clearly documented in the staff and student handbooks, including links to Middlesex University's guidelines where relevant.

The Executive Academic Management Group and Board of Directors use the annual monitoring review process effectively to inform the strategic planning for the Institution. Quality assurance principles are fully embedded throughout the Institution, shaped by the guiding requirements of Middlesex University as the validating partner, and are effectively reinforced and monitored by dedicated quality assurance managers.

The Institution undertakes regular and systematic monitoring of its operations through the annual monitoring review process. This includes consideration of comprehensive statistical data and a review of performance over time against relevant indicators. Quality reports include a suitable trend analysis in relation to student satisfaction, achievement levels, and completion and progression rates.

Managers compile a detailed and useful performance statistics report, which provides senior leaders and directors with a comprehensive view of the Institution's performance to help with informed and effective decision-making.

A comprehensive suite of quality assurance policies and procedures, as detailed in the staff and student handbooks, is focused on ensuring the quality of the student experience. This includes the systematic review of end-of-module and end-of-year student feedback surveys, to ensure that leaders and managers pay particular attention to students' views and their experience at AKTO.

Undergraduate and postgraduate annual monitoring reviews are produced by quality managers in partnership with programme leaders to provide a comprehensive and thorough evaluation of each programme. This approach is effective in ensuring that any issues that are common across programmes are quickly identified, and appropriate improvement action-planning is taken.

General performance reports are provided to the Board of Directors and include appropriate key performance indicators with suitable analysis. Middlesex University, as the validating body, requires the use of external assessors during the development of a programme and during its operation. External examiner reports are considered by programme leaders in their annual monitoring reviews, and this ensures effective external monitoring of all provision.

Programme leader committee meetings and the Executive Academic Management Group provide effective oversight to ensure the outcomes of programme monitoring activities result in appropriate improvement action-planning. These arrangements help to ensure the quality of provision is maintained.

28. The institution has a strong commitment to, and procedures that facilitate, continuing enhancement of its provision

28.1	Good practice is effectively identified and disseminated across the institution.	☒ Yes ☐ No
28.2	End-of-session course and annual programme reports include improvement and ongoing developments made and identify further areas requiring enhancement.	☒ Yes ☐ No
28.3	Action plans for enhancement are implemented and reviewed regularly within the institution's committee structure.	☒ Yes ☐ No

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met

Comments

The Institution has a range of effective mechanisms to ensure that good practice is effectively identified and disseminated. For example, workshops for lecturers provide useful opportunities for staff to share and learn from best practice. The annual visit by the Middlesex University link tutor is used as an effective opportunity for staff development, when partners can share best practice, and enhancements to teaching can be discussed and supported.

The annual monitoring reviews for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are comprehensive and provide a thorough review and evaluation of programmes. These provide clear and useful recommendations on actions to be taken to further enhance the provision.

Action plans agreed by the Board of Directors are effectively implemented by programme teams and monitored via programme leader meetings and by quality managers. This oversight ensures that action-planning is effective in raising standards.

INSPECTION AREA – ONLINE, DISTANCE AND BLENDED LEARNING

29. The institution has suitable staff to ensure the successful delivery of online and distance learning

29.1	Staff have an understanding of the specific requirements of online, distance and blended learning.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
29.2	Academic staff are properly and continuously trained with respect to provider policies, student needs, instructional approaches and techniques and the use of appropriate instructional technology.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
29.3	Tutors have an understanding of the special challenges and demands of online, distance and blended learning.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA
29.4	Staff ensure students are made aware of the necessary level of digital literacy required to follow the stated programmes.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ NA
29.5	Instructions and suggestions on how to study and how to use the online tutorial materials are made available to assist students to learn effectively and efficiently.	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

This standard is judged to be:

☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met ☐ NA

Comments

The Institution does not currently provide regular online or distance learning, and therefore, students are not required to meet specific levels of digital literacy. Online delivery is only used to replace in-person delivery on a contingency basis, such as unplanned academic staff absence or the inability of students to attend the Institution.

Relevant training has been provided to ensure staff understand the specific requirements of online and distance learning. The training is supported by comprehensive written guidance documents that provide staff with effective technical and pedagogical support for those implementing online teaching.

Students have access to clear and helpful guidance documents to assist them in accessing online learning when provided.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated

☒ Yes ☐ No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Institution's strengths

The Institution is successful in maintaining a positive and mature partnership with its validating partner, providing a consistent and high-quality student experience.

Leaders have established clear and efficient structures to ensure oversight of academic matters is effective.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

GENERAL AND ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Institution's strengths

Systematic and efficient staff and student record and administration systems ensure the effective running of the Institution.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
6.7 Leaders and managers must ensure that the performance of non-academic staff is monitored through a clearly documented and transparent appraisal system.	☐ High ☒ Medium ☐ Low

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Institution's strengths

Managers recruit experienced and credible vocational professionals who use their expertise well to develop students' employability skills and industrial competence.

Students benefit from small group sizes that allow lecturers to provide high levels of personalised support, feedback and guidance.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

STUDENT SUPPORT, GUIDANCE AND PROGRESSION

Institution's strengths

Rigorous and robust admissions processes ensure students are recruited to courses that meet their needs and educational goals.

Students benefit from effective welfare and counselling support to meet their personal needs.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

PREMISES, FACILITIES AND LEARNING RESOURCES

Institution's strengths

Student benefit from modern, attractive and well-resourced premises that support creative and practical learning very well.

Students have access to a broad range of professional and practical learning resources that effectively support their independent learning skills.	
Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

QUALITY MANAGEMENT, ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

Institution's strengths

Systematic and thorough quality systems provide leaders and managers with effective oversight to maintain high standard of education.	
Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

ONLINE, DISTANCE AND BLENDED LEARNING

Institution's strengths

Students and staff have access to clear and helpful guidance documents to assist them with online learning.	
Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Institution's key strategic goals should be more widely communicated outside the Institution. It is recommended that details of someone who can be contacted in the event of an emergency are obtained and suitably recorded for every student. It is recommended that references are taken up for all staff. Managers should consider making additional inside space available for students to socialise and consume food at the Athens campus. Managers should explore ways to gain higher response rates to online student satisfaction surveys.	
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COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:

Steve Ingle	Lead Inspector
Bob Harris	Team Inspector
Matthew Kitching	Student Inspector

