



## **BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT**

### **INTERIM INSPECTION (Independent Higher Education)**

<b>INSTITUTION:</b>	International Business School, Budapest
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	Zahoney Utca 7 Budapest H-1031 Hungary
<b>HEAD OF INSTITUTION:</b>	Dr Ratz and Mr Lang
<b>ACCREDITATION STATUS:</b>	Accredited
<b>DATE OF INSPECTION:</b>	17 March 2025
<b>ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:</b>	Continued accreditation, 29 May 2025

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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### **1. Background to the institution**

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The International Business School, Budapest (IBS) is a privately owned Higher Education Institution (HEI) that was established in 1991. It has degree-awarding powers granted by the Government of Hungary, as well as provision offered and validated through an affiliation agreement with the University of Buckingham in the United Kingdom (UK).

The Institution provides foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including degrees in Business and Management, Humanities and Social Sciences. The programmes are aimed at domestic and international students. All courses are delivered in English, except for a small number of courses offered in Hungarian which are currently being taught out.

The Institution is based in a business park on the outskirts of Budapest. The Institution has a small satellite campus in Vienna, Austria, which opened in 2013 and is administered from Budapest. The Institution's building in Vienna is located near the city centre.

The mission of the Institution is to create added-value for its students by developing their core employability skills, as well as providing services that facilitate connections between students and employers.

As a private university, the Institution has a Maintainer company, which has a legal obligation to oversee operations and is required to be consulted on strategic matters as it exercises the rights of the Institution's founder. The Institution has an owner with a majority holding in the Maintainer company. The Rector and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) are the senior managers within the Institution. They work with the strategic management board and the Senate. The Senate is the senior strategic committee of the Institution.

The Rector is supported by Pro-Rectors for Student Services, Quality Assurance and Enhancement, and Marketing and Admissions. The CEO is supported by the Chief Accountant, the Chief Human Resources (HR) Officer, the Chief Data Officer and other senior managers.

The Institution developed its first UK–university partnership with Oxford Brookes University in 1991. This partnership was replaced in 2012 by a partnership agreement with the University of Buckingham.

Since the previous inspection, there have been some changes in staff and in the provision. Some of the previous Master's and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programmes are no longer offered. All the students on these programmes had completed their studies. The decision to remove these programmes was based on insufficient demand.

### **2. Brief description of the current provision**

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The Institution offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. These degrees include courses validated by the University of Buckingham and degree courses awarded by the Institution. The undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses validated by the University of Buckingham include degrees in Business and Management, Corporate Finance, Marketing, Information Technology (IT) for Business, Data Analytics, International Affairs Management and Human Resources Management.

The language of tuition is English for all courses, including both the courses that are validated by the University of Buckingham and those offered by the Institution itself in its own right as a Hungarian HEI, except for a small part of the provision which is delivered in Hungarian and is currently being taught out.

The Institution's courses which were formerly taught in Hungarian include a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Business Administration and Management, a BSc in International Business Economics, a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in International Relations, and a Master of Science (MSc) in Business Development. The Institution awards its own undergraduate degrees in Business Administration and Management, International Business Economics,

Commerce and Marketing, International Relations, and Psychology. The Institution offers an unaccredited International University Foundation course.

At the time of the inspection, there were 1,675 students enrolled. A very small minority of students were aged under 18. The majority of the students are male, and the largest nationality within the student body of IBS is Hungarian. Other countries represented in bigger numbers include India, Pakistan, Nepal and Iran. The Institution has a physical capacity for 2,000 students at any one time. Most teaching is carried out in person. A very small minority of students were enrolled on online courses.

Students can enrol at the beginning of each semester in September or February during the academic year. All students studying degree programmes in English have to demonstrate evidence of English language proficiency. Enrolment on the Master's programmes require students to have an undergraduate qualification.

### **3. Inspection process**

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The inspection was conducted by one inspector over one day, online. Interviews were held with the Rector, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), academic managers, the Pro-Rector for Quality and Enhancement, teachers and students. Observations of teaching and learning were carried out. A range of documentary evidence was scrutinised. The Institution's staff were very co-operative throughout the inspection process.

### **4. Inspection history**

<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Full Accreditation	10–11 May 2018
Supplementary	27 February 2019
Interim and Supplementary	18–19 November 2019
Re-accreditation	4–6 October 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 institution.*

### **1. Significant changes since the last inspection**

The Institution has a new Rector and CEO. The new Rector was appointed in June 2024 and had, previously, been the Pro-Rector for Teaching and Learning for the Institution. The CEO was appointed in February 2025. The CEO had been the Chief Business Development Officer at the Institution. The Rector is responsible for teaching, learning and research, quality and enhancement, operations and committee structures. The CEO is responsible for economic and business development, legal and administration functions, institutional resources, HR, marketing and corporate relations..

The Institution's own Master's degree is not currently being run, along with four of the ten Master's programmes and two of the four PhD programmes validated by the University of Buckingham. This decision was made as a result of low recruitment.

### **2. Response to action points in last report**

There were no action points in the previous inspection report.

### **3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report**

*The Institution should record all academic area meetings.*

This recommendation has been met. There is comprehensive evidence of detailed records of all academic meetings. Meeting notes are carefully recorded and include a summary of discussions and clear actions, including the person responsible and dates for completion. They are effectively disseminated to team members.

*IBS should provide a clear overview and description of all its quality assurance processes.*

This recommendation has been met. Clear descriptions and flowcharts within the digital and paper-based quality assurance handbook provide a clear overview of the Institution's quality assurance processes.

### **4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements**

#### **4.1 Governance, Strategy and Financial Management (spot check)**

**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

A clear organisational structure is well documented and communicated to stakeholders. The role and extent of authority of the owner, Maintainer company and senior leaders are well defined and documented, and evidence from meetings with staff demonstrates that the roles and extent of authority are clearly and effectively communicated in staff handbooks.

The Senate is identified as the senior decision-making body of the Institution. The Rector, together with the CEO and other senior leaders, provide clear oversight and have delegated decision-making authority for financial and academic matters. As a result, all stakeholders understand the structure and the role and extent of authority at all levels of the Institution.

The Rector and CEO are joint heads of the Institution. The senior leaders have high-level, appropriate qualifications and extensive experience of management in HEIs. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and their individual and joint contribution to the effective management of the Institution. This results in very effective senior leadership

A clear and well-structured risk strategy includes a well-developed, focused and regularly reviewed risk register. Documentary evidence shows that the Senate and the Board regularly review risks for all aspects of the Institution and implement robust risk assessment procedures. This results in risks being effectively managed and mitigated to ensure the Institution continues to provide a high standard of education.

Communication is highly effective. Documentary and interview evidence demonstrates that formal and informal means of communication are used very well. Senior leaders share a detailed and comprehensive bi-monthly newsletter that contains information on any key decisions made and any institutional developments.

E-mail and personal messaging through a multiplatform messaging application is used to communicate specific decisions, ensuring clarity and accountability. School-wide meetings are held at the beginning of each semester and at the end of the academic year. This results in staff and students being well informed. Students and staff confirm that they find communication effective, and inspection findings endorse this view.

The Institution has a clear and well-developed strategy for the development and improvement of its provision. The strategic plan shows that data and research are used to inform strategic decisions. Consultation with key stakeholders, particularly students and future employers, is used well to establish a needs-led strategic direction. The strategy is well structured and has clear priorities that reflect student and employer priorities. This results in highly effective, strategic decision-making that supports the continuous development and improvement of the Institution's provision.

Senior leaders conduct a regular and systematic review of the Institution's performance against strategic targets and performance indicators. This includes historical data that informs trend analysis. The self-evaluation report is highly effective in gathering and reviewing a range of data at programme- and module level. A range of relevant strengths and accurate areas to improve are identified.

Documentary evidence from review documents shows that the Senate and senior leaders use the report effectively to consider overall performance against strategic goals and key indicators, including student performance and the quality of the student experience. This results in highly effective self-evaluation of institutional performance, resulting in actions that improve the student experience.

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#### 4.2 General and Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

An appropriate committee structure is in place. Documentary evidence from comprehensive overviews of all committees shows clear and well-defined reporting lines. This results in managers being well supported in their responsive decision-making to improve the student experience.

All committees have clear, well-developed terms of reference that inform the purpose and context of the committee. Evidence from committee reports and interviews with staff shows that the outcomes of committee meetings are well documented and disseminated and have resulted in improvements.

An effective security framework protects the data of all staff and students. An appropriate data-processing policy and effective data-protection regulations underpin the protection of data. The Institution uses multi-factor authentication, and permission for access is only given to authorised users. Discussions with managers confirm that the Institution takes data security seriously. Managers have implemented clear, robust and effective data-protection arrangements that help keep the personal data of staff and students secure.

The security of examinations and other means of assessment is effective. A review of the administrative systems demonstrates that an electronic administration system is used for all means of assessment, resulting in no hard copies. Security is assured within the same digital protection infrastructure and applied to the protection of personal data. This includes the use of strict access and multi-factor authorisation. This results in the security of all means of assessment.

Regular, planned, well-structured and documented performance reviews are effective in managing the performance of all staff, including teachers. Evidence from performance review and interview-based evidence with staff together show that performance reviews include goal-setting and are linked to the strategic priorities of the Institution. Reviews rigorously capture the achievements of all staff as well as detailed areas for improvement.

Performance reviews for teachers include the outcomes of regular peer observations. Outcomes of performance reviews are captured in detailed training plans. This results in all staff being very well supported in their Continuing Professional Development.

The academic review of programmes is highly effective. Documentary evidence from review reports shows that for programmes validated by the University of Buckingham, an annual programme review and examination board meetings are scheduled and well recorded. Comprehensive five-year reviews are conducted for these programmes.

The Institution also reviews its own degree programmes at examination board meetings. Documentary evidence shows that these meetings are clearly scheduled, and outcomes are detailed and well recorded. Participants at examination board meetings include module and academic area leaders and external examiners.

Reviews include comprehensive evidence of assessment and robust and detailed outcomes of moderation. There are detailed recorded discussions on curriculum development and programme improvements. This results in the continuous improvement of academic programmes.

The inclusion of students in developing academic programmes is highly effective. Documentary evidence from programme reviews and change requests shows that students provide useful feedback each semester on the student experience. Interviews with students confirm that they are regularly asked for feedback, which is used to develop and improve academic programmes.

Evidence from interviews with academic managers shows that the feedback received from students is positively considered to inform improvements. Students have the opportunity to make regular curriculum change requests via a learning platform. These requests are communicated to the teaching and learning committee.

Formal representation of students is included at the teaching and learning committee and at course-level meetings. This results in effective mechanisms to ensure a student-centered approach to programme development.

Clear and appropriate entry criteria for all programmes are fully detailed in course documentation on the website. The criteria include, for example, the achievement of a high school certificate and specific attainment of spoken and written language skills. Students confirmed to inspectors that the entry and language requirements are accessible and clear. This results in students being well informed about the entry and language requirements that support achievement in their programme of study.

The Institution is very effective in actively encouraging staff to undertake research and publish the results. A clear and appropriate policy, and feedback from staff, show that all forms of research are encouraged, with many staff choosing to focus on research in teaching and learning, curriculum development and the student learning experience. This results in the majority of staff being actively engaged in research activities, which has a positive effect on the student experience.

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#### 4.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

Teaching and learning are very good. Evidence from Curricula Vitae (CVs) shows that teachers have high levels of academic achievement and experience. Evidence from classroom observations shows that teachers have excellent pedagogic and communication skills, which results in students being very effectively engaged in the learning process.

Classes are taught at an appropriate level, and the content supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. This results in students benefiting from a consistently high standard of teaching, which helps them to develop the knowledge and skills needed to progress.

The planning, delivery and assessment of course content are good. Evidence from observations shows a clear focus on the knowledge and skills required for achievement in assessment activities and examinations. However, the link to module learning outcomes that is included in the course planning documents is not fully transparent so that teachers can make the links clear to students.

Strategies to ensure student participation in learning are exceptionally good. Observation and planning evidence shows a range of group and individual work that encourages and enables students to participate in case studies, videos and course material. This includes debates, presentations, group discussion tasks and individual research activities. This results in students being highly engaged in their learning.

A clear and well-communicated assessment schedule supports students' understanding of assessment submission dates, examination dates and planned revision periods. Students can access assessment schedules on the learning platform. Students confirm that they have easy access to the schedule and that it supports planning for assessment and final examinations. This results in students being well informed about the assessment deadlines, revision periods and dates of final examinations.

Guidance for assessment tasks is comprehensive. Evidence from written tasks shows that these are detailed, informative and clearly identify what is needed to complete all the tasks. Students confirm that information on what is expected in the assessment is very good. This results in students being well informed about the expectations at assessment and supports achievement in assessment.

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#### 4.4 Student Support, Guidance and Progression (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

Highly effective safeguarding arrangements are in place to protect students. Documentary evidence from the safeguarding policy and procedures and central records and staff interview evidence show that there is a clear and well-communicated policy that is shared with all staff and parents of students who are aged under 18 years.

There is a named Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Designated Safeguarding Training Officer (DSTO). Comprehensive training is available for all staff, including volunteers and subcontractors. Staff confirm that training is at three levels to ensure appropriate training is provided for specific staff members, subcontractors and volunteers. This includes the DSL. The Pro-Rector for Student Services provides Board-level responsibility for safeguarding.

There is clear documentary evidence on the single central record of effective vetting and safer recruitment, including appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for all staff and the dates when references and checks have been completed. Documentary evidence from reviews of safeguarding processes shows that the DSTO regularly reviews and updates the safeguarding arrangements. Students

confirm that they feel safe, and inspection findings endorse this view. This results in very effective safeguarding for all students.

A comprehensive policy, set of procedures and training underpin very effective arrangements to protect students from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. A well-developed policy, comprehensive and appropriate risk assessment and targeted training plans, including mandatory refresher training, support students in being effectively protected from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Interviews with students confirm that they feel well informed about the potential dangers and how to protect themselves. This results in students being effectively protected.

Academic progress reviews and interventions to support students who are not making the progress expected of them are particularly good. Reports show that student progress is formally reviewed at three points during each semester by the semester lead for each course. A range of data is used, including attendance, skills course registration and assessment outcomes.

The student administrative team robustly checks whether students are accessing the skills courses they have been referred to for additional support and regularly contacts students to encourage participation. The student well-being team is proactive in contacting at-risk students to ensure that all the appropriate support arrangements are in place.

Students confirm that regular academic reviews and proactive support are highly effective. Inspection findings confirm this view. This results in students being well supported to achieve and progress.

The Institution has a comprehensive and well-communicated policy on identifying and meeting the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A clear and comprehensive policy and set of procedures are available digitally and shared at induction. Evidence from meetings with students confirms that they are well informed about the policy and how they can identify any additional support needs.

Students are asked to disclose any support needs at enrolment. An additional student disclosure form is available if students do not want to disclose SEND at enrolment. The student well-being team manages this. Evidence from case studies shows that effective and structured identification and support are provided to students for access to the curriculum or planned assessments. This results in students' access to educational opportunities being promoted and supported.

International students are provided with comprehensive support before arriving in the country. This includes advice on travelling to and living in Hungary. A comprehensive induction programme and e-booklet provide advice and guidance on accommodation and information on the local area and life in Budapest.

Students confirmed that they had been given useful information to help them transition to a new country and city. Inspection findings endorse this view. This results in students being able to settle quickly into their studies and life away from home.

The Institution has a clear, published policy on student attendance and punctuality that is referred to at induction and in the student handbooks. Students confirm that they understand their responsibilities to be punctual and to attend teaching sessions. Inspection findings endorse this view.

The Institution implements very effective arrangements to manage student attendance and punctuality. Detailed case studies show that procedures and systems to support good attendance and punctuality are used by staff to review and manage poor attendance and punctuality. Data reports and evidence of intervention show that unauthorised absences are followed up and supportive actions are taken. However, the monitoring of attendance to ensure timely interventions is not always carried out in a consistent way so that student absences may be missed.

Evidence from student interviews shows that managing attendance includes targeted support and a review of the impact of that support. Outcomes of the support identified in case studies show that this results in attendance and punctuality improving, thus supporting students' progress and achievement.

Students are provided with a range of detailed information on the social activities that are available at the Institution via the VLE and social media. A published social activities calendar, including posters, shows that this includes a welcome party, an international day and the annual awards ceremony. Students confirm that they receive useful information on social activities and that this is well communicated. Inspection findings confirm this. This results in a social programme that reflects and meets students' needs and interests.

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#### 4.5 Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

A clear and systematic process ensures the currency and adequacy of library stock. Documentary and interview evidence from the staff and student library handbooks and discussions with students and staff show that there is a clear and well-publicised acquisition policy that outlines how faculty and students can request library resources. This includes requests via the VLE or e-mail to the Chief Librarian.

Digital resources are prioritised to enable quick access for staff and students. Documentary evidence from programme reviews shows that annual reviews are conducted to further ensure resources are current and reflect the needs of teachers and students. This results in the provision of effective resources to support teaching, learning and research.

Library hours are sufficient to support students' independent learning. Hours are extended during assessment and examination periods.

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#### 4.6 Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

A robust system of stakeholder feedback, which is analysed and evaluated effectively, provides detailed, comprehensive information that informs managers' decision-making, leading to positive improvements. Evidence from the quality handbook, scrutiny of completed feedback forms, and discussions with staff and students show that feedback is regularly collected from students, faculty, employers and alumni.

Student feedback is collected at the end of each semester and the student survey includes a broad range of questions focused on the student experience. Faculty feedback is collected via a survey at the end of each academic year and includes a broad range of questions that measure staff satisfaction with support, workload and training.

Alumni feedback is collected fifteen months after graduation through the HESA Graduate Outcomes Survey. It is used to identify student destinations and support curriculum reviews. Analysis and evaluation of stakeholder feedback are reported to the Board, which monitors any actions taken. Students and staff confirm that feedback results in actions for improvement. Inspection findings confirm this.

Mechanisms to inform stakeholders of what has been done as a result of their feedback are highly effective. A formal report is shared with all stakeholders. The response to feedback is detailed and informative, and there are deadlines for the resolution of problems and monitoring of the completion of agreed actions. Institutional feedback on students' and staff's views is communicated via the VLE. Students confirm that they are well informed about what has been done as a result of their feedback. Inspection findings confirm this view.

Dissemination of good practice is very effective. The Institution uses various methods to share good practice. This includes tutor guides, weekly workshops, academic area meetings and one-to-one discussions following peer observations. A comprehensive and well-developed tutors' guide is provided on the VLE for all teaching staff. This identifies good practice in teaching, learning and assessment.

Weekly workshops, which are planned outside teaching time and include remote access, focus on innovative teaching strategies, the outcomes of internal research and case studies that demonstrate effective teaching and learning.

Academic area meetings include teachers teaching the same subject at various levels, and particularly effective teaching methodologies are shared alongside course delivery approaches. There are workshops each semester that include a discussion on evolving teaching practice.

Peer observations are also used to share good practice, particularly with new teachers. Discussions with staff showed that the sharing of good practice has informed teacher improvement. This results in an effective and systematic approach to sharing and disseminating good practice with all teachers.

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#### 4.7 Online, Distance and Blended Learning (spot check)

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

**Comments**

Teachers of online learning have a good understanding of the requirements and challenges of online learning and have access to effective ongoing training and support. Interviews with teachers delivering courses online identified a suitable range of strategies to meet the challenges of online learning. This includes student engagement strategies and ways to modify topics and teaching methods in order to encourage positive participation.

Teachers have access to an extensive range of course materials and information on good practice on the VLE.

Clear and illustrative training materials provide useful guidance on how to teach effectively online. This results in teachers being well supported to deliver online learning.

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#### 4.8 Compliance Declaration

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**Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.**  Yes  No

**PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS**

**STRENGTHS**

Rigorous and systematic reviews of performance inform detailed action-planning, leading to the continuous improvement of the student experience.

Excellent teaching and learning support high levels of student achievement and progress.

Comprehensive and well-managed support for students ensures equality of access to the curriculum, assessments and examinations, resulting in very good achievement and progress for all students.

Highly effective mechanisms to share good practice support high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

None

High  Medium  Low

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

It is recommended that the Institution makes the links to the learning outcomes in the course planning documents more transparent.

It is recommended that the Institution ensure greater consistency in attendance monitoring.

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE**

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**BAC OFFICE USE ONLY:**

**THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:**

Linda Ross

Lead Inspector