



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM VISIT (Independent Higher Education)

INSTITUTION: University of New York in Prague

ADDRESS: Londynska 41
120 00 Praha 2
Vinohrady
Czech Republic

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Dr Andreas Antonopoulos

DATE OF VISIT: 16 May 2018

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION ON ACCREDITATION: Continued accreditation 19 July 2018

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

The University of New York in Prague (UNYP/the Institution) was established in 1998 as a branch of New York College (NYC) Athens. It is a private for-profit organisation. The President of both colleges is their majority shareholder and also owns, under the NYC Educational Group name, New York College Thessaloniki and the University of New York in Tirana. In February 2001, UNYP was initially accredited by BAC as part of the Athens College accreditation but, since 2008, has been independently accredited. The University delivers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Business and Management, Communication and Media, Information Technology and English Language

The Mission of UNYP is to provide transformative education that allows students to discover their potential and become reflective, tolerant and resourceful individuals equipped with the skills and knowledge to meet the challenges of an interconnected world.

The Institution is located in the Vinohrady downtown district in the heart of Prague. The main campus is located on Londynska Street where academic and support staff are located and nearly all the teaching takes place. The Institution also has taken a lease on a nearby building on Belgika Street, which houses its counselling service for students and staff, a writing and resource laboratory for students and a seminar room to cater for any over capacity from the main campus building.

UNYP is approved by the Czech Ministry of Education to award degrees, delivers programmes in conjunction with SUNY Empire State College and LaSalle University in United States of America (USA) and has collaborative arrangements with the University of Bolton and University of Greenwich for the delivery of some postgraduate programmes. Its business provision is accredited by the International Accreditation Council for Business Education which is a USA accrediting body. At the time of this interim inspection, the Institution was undergoing a major re-approval process with the Czech Ministry of Education because of significant changes in the law with regard to higher education.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Institution delivers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in business, management and related areas. Its undergraduate provision includes a three-year Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), on which students can choose to specialise in finance or marketing under the BBA award title. UNYP also delivers a Bachelor of Arts (BA) Communication and Mass Media, a BA International and Economic Relations and a BA Psychology. In addition, UNYO delivers a BA in English Language and Literature and a BA in Information Technology (IT) Management, both of which are exclusively awards of SUNY Empire State College.

For postgraduate provision, the Institution delivers a Master of Business Administration (MBA), which is not recognised by the Czech Ministry of Education as it does not recognise MBA as an award at any institution, but which is accredited by the Czech Association of MBA Schools and the International Accreditation Council for Business Education. It also delivers a Master of Arts (MA) Psychology awarded by UNYP. Its collaborations with United Kingdom (UK) universities are for a Master of Science (MSc) in International Management and a Master of Laws (LLM) for the University of Bolton and an MA in Second Language Teaching and Learning validated by the University of Greenwich. It also delivers an MA in Strategic Management awarded by LaSalle University in the USA. It has agreements with the National American University where it promotes and recruits students for this organisation's MBA online but does not deliver the programme. It also has a similar agreement with the University of Bolton for Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) provision.

There is currently a total of 654 students studying at UNYP, most of whom are studying full-time with only six studying part-time. All students are over the age of 18 years. Around one third of the student body are Czech

nationals with the remaining students coming from over 60 different countries, including other Slovak countries such as Azerbaijan.

3. Inspection visit process

The inspection was undertaken by a senior inspector over a half day. The inspector met with the Dean of Academic Development, the General Manager, the Rector and the Manager of the Rector's Office. There was also a final meeting with senior management to discuss matters which had arisen during the inspection and to provide some initial feedback. A wide range of documentation was provided electronically for scrutiny by the inspector, which effectively supported the key elements of the inspection. The Institution had undertaken a considerable amount of preparatory work for this interim inspection and the meetings were held in a pleasant and collegiate manner.

4. Inspection history

Full inspection:	1-2 February 2001
Interim inspection:	February 2003
Re-accreditation inspection:	27-28 February 2008
Interim inspection:	23 February 2011
Re-accreditation inspection:	10-11 May 2012
Interim inspection:	24 July 2014
Re-accreditation inspection:	4-5 April 2016

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

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

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

There is one significant change since the last inspection and this is related to changes in the law regarding the provision of higher education in the Czech Republic, which took effect from September 2016 and applies to all higher education institutions in the Czech Republic, both public and private. This process is requiring all institutions to complete an in-depth self-evaluation exercise and to seek approval for its entire provision. To date, UNYP has achieved Ministry of Education registration for its programmes with the University of Bolton and the University of Greenwich as well as its own programmes, which are regarded as non-European Union programmes, with the Suny Empire State College and Lasalle University in the USA.

The process also requires the Institution to review its institutional statute and internal regulations, draft institutional learning outcomes and introduce a range of quality assurance processes, including a five-yearly self-evaluation process. This is a significant and critical process for the Institution, which it has understandably prioritised. It is planned to be completed by the end of 2019 at the latest. In tandem with these regulatory changes, the Institution is beginning to appoint a significant number of additional full-time academic staff who it is expected will be active researchers and who will play a key role in the management and quality assurance of specific programmes.

In addition, the title of the LaSalle University programme has changed from MA Professional and Business Communication to MA Strategic Communication.

2. Response to action points in last report

1.4 1.6 The Institution must seek to establish risk management policies/procedures.

The Czech Republic has not historically had a tradition of risk management, but the Institution has begun to address this omission by consulting the approaches taken by a number of UK institutions with the aim of gradually introducing risk management procedures. The Institution plans to continue to address this action point once the re-approval process with the Ministry of Education is complete.

5.6 The Institution must introduce a more formal system for staff to apply for support to develop their skills.

The Institution has identified an academic staff member with specific responsibilities to design and deliver staff development in key pedagogic areas. As a result, workshops have taken place in administering and evaluating student presentations, getting students to read, strategies for minimising plagiarism and other academic offences and using technology in the classroom. Staff attendance at these sessions has been mixed, but it is anticipated that this will improve with the increase in the number of full-time academic staff appointments, which are to be made. Staff are able to seek support for external activities such as PhD and other higher level academic and teaching qualifications.

9.8 The Institution must introduce internal and external moderators across all programmes.

The Institution has begun to address the matter of internal moderation and is implementing a pilot process, through which English language placement tests are being double marked. The Institution is aware that it needs to expedite the implementation of internal moderation across all of its provision, with the exception of its UK university programmes, which are all currently subject to internal moderation as part of the agreements with those universities. The appointment of what are called guarantors in the Czech system, as part of the changes due to take place in response to the requirements of the Ministry of Education, will enable the Institution to

progress this further as the guarantors have a key role in the quality assurance at individual programme level. The Institution is aware that double marking is only one way of ensuring consistency in marking and the maintenance of academic standards and it aims to consider other ways of moderation to include sampling.

There is no tradition of external examiners in the Czech or American higher education system, although the Institution’s programmes with the UK universities do have external examiners appointed by the respective university. The Institution understands the importance of external moderation and plans to investigate ways of achieving compliance with this indicator whilst appreciating the significant challenges which this poses in terms of identifying external examiners who not only are proficient English speakers but who also understand the Czech and American higher education systems.

12.7 UNYP must create and publish a clear policy/system on students with special/additional needs.

In 2016 the Institution produced and published a comprehensive policy on accommodating students with disabilities. This is available to all students. Relevant students also have access to the policies of the Institution’s partner institutions including SUNY Empire College and LaSalle.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

There were no recommendations in the last report.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Governance, Strategy and Financial Management (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be		✓		
Comments				
There have been no changes to the arrangements for governance, strategy and financial management and the Institution is still working towards the 2016 to 2020 strategy in place at the time of the last inspection and which was found to be comprehensive and appropriate.				
1.4 1.6 The Institution has yet to implement risk management policies and procedures.				

4.2 Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				
The arrangements for management and administration remain as they were in 2016 but it is anticipated that the new legal environment in Czech higher education will generate some changes. One of these will be the role of guarantor which will introduce closer quality assurance management at programme level.				
It is also anticipated that the committee system will be revised and in particular a separate quality committee will be established.				
The appointment of additional full-time academic staff will have a positive impact on academic management in that programme leaders will be allocated responsibilities for management and quality assurance at programme level.				

The staff appraisal process continues to be implemented for all staff. For academic staff, this involves a reflection on student evaluations and teaching observations. Academic staff are able to access workshops as well as seeking financial and other support from the Institution for external staff development.

The policies and procedures, which were in draft form at the time of the 2016 inspection, have since been finalised and published. These are reviewed on an annual basis and are made available on the website.

The website includes reference to partnerships which have now ceased.

4.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be		✓		
Comments				
<p>Students continue to benefit from an approach to learning which is delivered through a variety of teaching methods.</p> <p>Class sizes are restricted to a maximum of 28 to ensure that all students are able to contribute effectively to the learning process and to enable staff to monitor individual student progress.</p> <p>Modules include a number of assessment points to enable students and staff to monitor progress within each module.</p> <p>Teaching observation is well embedded and the outcomes feed into staff appraisal.</p> <p>9.8 The matter of internal and external moderation requires attention.</p>				

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

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				
<p>The Institution's approach to the support of its students remains a key priority and is a strength. Students have access to a range of support services including counselling.</p> <p>UYNP takes particular and specific care to monitor the progress of its students and this is a clear strength of its provision. Academic performance is closely monitored and there is a mandatory requirement for students to meet with an advisor for this purpose. An effective system is in place to warn students whose performance falls below the standard required, places relevant students on probation and, in some cases, involves the Rector meeting specific students. Attendance is mandatory and the Institution closely monitors attendance and follows up students who are not attending.</p>				

4.5 Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<p>Comments</p> <p>The campus is located in a pleasant building in a quiet but accessible part of Prague. The building has been significantly modernised and updated to provide an excellent environment for learning and for staff to work.</p> <p>The addition of extra accommodation nearby, which contains the counselling services, student laboratory and an extra seminar room is augmenting what is already a high standard of accommodation.</p>				

4.6 Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<p>Comments</p> <p>The Institution continues to implement a range of effective quality assurance procedures and its management of quality will be enhanced through the additional measure to be introduced in response to the new legal requirements. This includes the establishment of a quality committee and a five-year self-evaluation process. The identification and use of Key Performance Indicators is beginning to enable the Institution to track its progress more effectively.</p>				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS
The Institution's approach to student support and in particular the ways in which it monitors individual student performance and progression and addresses actions arising from this monitoring.

ACTIONS REQUIRED	Priority H/M/L
1.4 1.6 The Institution must establish risk management policies/procedures.	H
9.8 The Institution must progress the work that it has started with regard to internal moderation and ensure that all programmes are subject to some form of internal moderation. It must also address the requirement for external moderation for all programmes.	H

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
It is recommended that the Institution ensures that all information in student handbooks, the website and elsewhere is wholly accurate.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	
Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable	