

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Independent Higher Education)

INSTITUTION: Metropolitan College SA

ADDRESS: 74 Sorou Street
Maroussi
Athens 15125
Greece

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Dimitris Diamantis

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 29 May 2025

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 25 September 2025

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Metropolitan College SA (MC/the Institution) was established in 1982. It is a member of the Mitropolitiko Accomplishment Knowledge Mobility Innovation (AKMI) Group, which is active in the field of post-secondary education, vocational training and lifelong learning in Greece. The Mitropolitiko AKMI Group is a large education group in Greece with more than 24,000 students. Since 2023, the Mitropolitiko AKMI Group has been owned by Alphabet Education Group, which is part of Baring Capital (BC) Partners Investment Group.

MC is a privately owned college based in Greece. It offers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that are franchised from or validated by universities in the United Kingdom (UK). MC has campuses in Maroussi, in Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Larissa, Rhodes, Patras and Crete. It also has a range of online study options.

The mission of the Institution is to provide transformational education that is intended to instil in its students strong academic skills, initiative and discipline, and to build a professional character and create a lifelong intellectual passion for learning among its students. MC's underlying philosophy is that a distinguished academic experience should provide students with a rich, rigorous, multi-faceted and diverse educational environment, endorse lifelong learning, and prepare them to meet the needs of an ever-changing world.

MC is governed by a Board of Directors. The executive management role is undertaken by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Alphabet Education Group. The Academic Board has an advisory role on all academic matters. The Principal is the General Director of MC and is an ex-officio member of both the Board of Directors and the Academic Board.

The Principal oversees a team of four Deputy Principals whose roles cover student relationship management, academic affairs, research and innovation, and global engagement. The Principal and Deputy Principals form MC's Executive Committee. The Dean of Quality and Academic Standards and the Academic Registrar both report to the Principal. The Academic Registrar manages the Head of Registry and Registry Office staff.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) comprises the members of the Executive Committee as well as the individual Campus Directors and their deputies. The Campus Directors oversee the quality of services and the role of their campus in the local community.

The SMT is responsible for operational strategy and policy across all campuses, in consultation with faculty staff, and reviews the performance of MC against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The Deputy Director of Academic Affairs (DDAA) is responsible for academic matters at each campus and reports to each Campus Director. A broad faculty structure operates across all campuses, headed by the Academic Deans.

British Accreditation Council (BAC) accreditation is solely for MC's Maroussi campus.

2. Brief description of the current provision

MC delivers a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Business, Management, Hospitality, Accounting and Finance, Information Technology (IT), Computing, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Special Needs Education, Early Childhood Studies and Primary Education, Psychology, Sport, Law, Engineering, Maritime Business, including shipping and port management, and Architecture.

The programmes are offered in conjunction with four UK partners. These are the University of East London, Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh, Southampton Solent University and Oxford Brookes University. The programmes are delivered in person and, since the academic year 2019/20, also online. The majority of programmes are taught in Greek, with the exception of the Maritime Business and the Psychology programmes, which are taught in English.

Some programmes are recognised by professional bodies, including the British Psychological Society (BPS), the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers (ICS), the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT), and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). MC is in the process of renewing its accreditation with the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS), in collaboration with the University of East London.

At the time of the inspection, there were 2,645 full-time and 37 part-time students studying at the Maroussi campus. There are about equal numbers of male and female students. The vast majority of students are Greek. A minority are international students, originating from Albania, Russia, Canada and countries in North Africa and Western Asia. All students are aged 18 or over.

Enrolment takes place in October for undergraduate students and in October and February for postgraduates. Students must have satisfactorily completed their secondary education before they are accepted onto a programme. English language proficiency, set at an appropriate level and approved by the partner universities, is required for the Maritime Business and Psychology programmes, which are taught in English.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector online in one day. Meetings were held with the Campus Director and the DDAA for the Maroussi campus, Deputy Principals for Academic Affairs, Research and Innovation, Quality and Academic Standards and Global Engagement, the Registrar Metropolitan College, the Head Registrar and the Registry Officer Maroussi campus, the Chief Technical Officer, the Librarian, the Head of the Academic Learning Centre, the Head of the Learning Difficulties Centre, two Quality Officers, and a representative group of staff and students. In addition, documentation was scrutinised and a teaching session was observed. All information was readily supplied, and the staff and students of the Institution co-operated fully with the inspection.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	21–22 October 2010
Interim	30 April 2012
Re-accreditation	15–16 December 2014
Interim	5 December 2016
Re-accreditation	14–15 January 2019
Interim and Supplementary	6–7 July 2021
Re-accreditation	16–18 May 2023
Supplementary	12 November 2024

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

Since the last full inspection, an additional building has been opened on the Maroussi campus, and a new CEO has been appointed, which led to a supplementary inspection in November 2024.

The Institution has implemented a policy on the identification and avoidance of conflicts of interest, a student complaints handling policy and a whistleblowing policy.

2. Response to action points in last report

There were no action points in the last full inspection report or the subsequent supplementary inspection report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that a committee structure diagram is included in the quality management system manual.

This recommendation has been met.

Organisational charts, including a committee structure and governance diagram, are now contained in the Institution's quality management system manual.

It is recommended that the Institution consider its library provision in its strategic plan, taking account of student views.

This recommendation has been met.

This is also a requirement of MC's partner universities. The library's development forms part of the strategic plan, and students' requests for wider access to academic journals have been addressed.

The Institution should record action plans and include deadlines and staff responsible for completion for all programme committee meetings.

This recommendation has been met.

Action plans, deadlines and staff responsible for meeting these are now included in programme committee meetings, as evidenced in the meeting minutes provided.

MC should increase its counselling capacity to enable students to access appointments quickly when necessary.

This recommendation has been met.

MC provides a counselling and consultation service. The counselling service is by appointment, but the consultation service operates on demand. The consultation service is the first line of help for students to discuss any issues, including their mental well-being. Students may be referred to the counselling service, which is open throughout the academic year when classes are running and in vacation periods. Two counsellors are available both on- and offline.

The Learning Difficulties Centre has an open-door facility for students to attend and discuss any issues that they are experiencing and is able to refer students to the counselling service. The centre also provides workshops on mindfulness and health. MC operates a personal tutor system for all its students. Academic staff commented

favourably on the level of service provided by student counselling. Students who were interviewed expressed the view that the counselling service is good. Two of them had recent practical experience of the service.

It is recommended that MC considers amending its complaints policy so that the escalation of complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved at programme level is formalised before complaints are presented for resolution to the partner university.

This recommendation has been met.

The student handbook clearly sets out the complaints process, which addresses the escalation of complaints through the Programme Leader, the DDA and the Dean of Faculty before further escalation to the partner university.

It is recommended that the Institution considers ways it can monitor IT disruption that occurs out of hours, enabling the opportunity for resolution before the next day when students and staff are on campus.

This recommendation has been met.

The Chief Technical Officer and the IT department oversee digital and cybersecurity issues. The Institution has implemented controls that monitor potential IT disruption in- and out-of-hours. Such events lead to notification to IT staff to trigger timely corrective action, usually before the next working day.

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

The working relationships between the Board of Directors and management are clearly set out in the quality management system manual. This enables effective communication with internal and external stakeholders. Information is made available on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for all stakeholders to see. This means that decisions of committees and the Board are quickly and easily communicated throughout the Institution.

Clear channels of communication, exemplified by formal link-tutor meetings, validation and franchise partnership events and informal discussions, are apparent between staff at the Institution and its partner universities. This ensures that MC functions effectively in working towards meeting its strategic goals and encourages effective communication with its partner universities.

An Executive Committee drawn from the SMT assesses risks regularly, including how they should be addressed, and reviews action plans to mitigate these. This is clearly set out in the risk management operations document dated October 2024. The Executive Committee reports on risk assessment and mitigation to the Board of Directors, the Academic Board and the SMT. This reassures senior members of the Institution that risk factors are being addressed and that action is taken to mitigate these.

MC's strategic plan is set out in its quality management system manual and is updated annually. The strategy relates to meeting the requirements of MC's partner universities in the provision of high-quality education, enabling students to enjoy a high-quality experience. Internal and external stakeholders are consulted on the contents. Implementation of the strategic plan through committees and student forums and performance towards its achievement are regularly reviewed by the Academic Board, Executive Committee and SMT, as shown in the SMT and Academic Board agendas. This ensures that stakeholders have input into the institutional strategy.

Strategy is well communicated to stakeholders through documentation and in practice. The close relationship the Institution has developed with its partner universities ensures that reliable information flows are maintained, as clearly exemplified in the partnership meeting minutes.

Senior management regularly and systematically reviews its own and MC's performance against strategic targets through the use of KPIs. The Executive Committee and Board of Directors review performance horizontally across all campuses. This enables scrutiny of provision, ensuring consistency across all campuses.

4.2 General and Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

MC operates an effective committee structure with reporting lines clearly set out. This enables effective decision-making and strong communication throughout the Institution and with external stakeholders.

The committee structure is outlined in the quality management system manual. Committees have clear terms of reference and meet regularly. Meeting notes reveal that committees operate good working practices, with minutes accurately recorded. Minutes of Academic Board meetings are provided to partner universities, enabling them to monitor MC's provision.

The Academic Deans have responsibility for ensuring the accuracy of information on programme content in promotional literature and on the website. Promotional literature in hard copy and online is accurate and carries appropriate photographs, providing prospective students with reliable information on the Institution's programmes and facilities.

The publicity material includes links to partner universities, which ensures that students are clear as to the awarding institution for their programme. All information, which is updated for relevance and accuracy, is circulated to staff by the quality assurance department and made available on the VLE.

Online data collection and collation are accurate and in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements. MC ensures that such information is accessed only by authorised staff. The system in use for the security and accuracy of data held is robust and effectively maintained. Students are required to verify information held on them each semester, and staff must notify MC of any changes in their personal information that is held by the Institution.

The security system includes appropriate verification that the student in receipt of an award is the same person who enrolled on the programme. Administrative staff confirm that they are fully aware of the security requirements of the partner universities relating to examinations and assessments. Inspection findings confirm this.

Internal and external moderation of assessments and marking accords with the requirements of the partner universities. Annual monitoring review and external examiner reports demonstrate that rigorous internal moderation is followed by extensive external moderation by the partner universities. External examiners ensure that the moderation process is robust. Inspection findings confirm this.

The quality management system manual includes rigorous staff recruitment procedures that ensure the employment of appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Job roles are clearly defined, enabling MC's SMT to review staff performance in accordance with the detailed job descriptions.

Classroom observations regularly take place, and outcomes feed into the annual performance development appraisal process, which applies to all staff. The process includes individual self-evaluation and informs the personal and professional development needs of staff, which are facilitated by MC where possible. This ensures that staff can develop the skills that enable improvements in their performance. Documentary

evidence, such as updated employee records and certificates of training completed, reveal that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is practised diligently by the Institution.

There are rigorous procedures for the design and approval of new programmes. The SMT assesses the business case for new programmes and how this relates to the strategic plan, particularly with regard to student demand and the proposed programme's unique selling point. Programmes that are proposed are subject to validation or franchise review by one of the partner universities.

All programmes offered by MC are ratified by the Greek Ministry of Education. All programmes are subject to revalidation or renewal of the franchise every five years, in accordance with standard practice. This ensures that programmes maintain their currency.

Student feedback on programmes is received formally each semester, as evidenced by the detailed summaries of feedback questionnaires completed. Programme committees, held every semester, allow student representatives to represent the views of students on programme management, content, delivery and assessment. This ensures students have an effective role in programme development and delivery.

Entry requirements for programmes are contained in programme descriptions, which are available online and in printed form. The requirements are at an appropriate level, being the satisfactory completion of the High School Leaving Certificate (Apolysterion) or equivalent and are approved by the partner universities. They include language requirements where necessary. Claims of qualifications and language capability are verified, and all student enrolment is subject to approval by the partner universities.

Student enquiries are responded to promptly, normally within 24 hours. The website and administrative staff provide prospective students with advice and guidance on content, and the demands programmes will make of them and their suitability.

MC's recruitment agents are carefully selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated on their performance. The agents receive a detailed induction on the requirements of academic programmes and the student selection and admission criteria. The recruitment agents are carefully monitored to ensure that they are representing MC appropriately. This ensures consistency in recruiting overseas students who are capable of successfully completing the Institution's programmes.

MC encourages and supports its staff to undertake research and scholarly activity. Academic staff attend conferences and publish in peer-reviewed academic journals. MC's Research Ethics Committee is responsible for ensuring that all research carried out meets the highest ethical standards. Staff are therefore encouraged to engage in research and scholarly activity, which enhances the reputation of the Institution as well as keeping staff's subject knowledge current. The scholarly activity of academic staff enhances teaching delivery as students are presented with up-to-date subject knowledge and research findings.

4.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Academic staff are effective in facilitating student-centred learning. The appointment of teaching staff follows a rigorous process. New staff receive an appropriate induction and are supported in their professional and academic development to ensure consistency in the delivery of teaching. The overall consistency and quality of delivery are monitored by the partner universities.

Various teaching methods are in use. There are lectures, tutorials, practical activities, case studies, portfolio compilations, presentations and break-out sessions. Teaching staff use a variety of pedagogic methods to address individual learning styles. The use of practical activities requires students to develop independent learning skills to successfully complete tasks set, as verified by students interviewed. Students are expected

to be responsible for their own academic development. This includes directed tasks and private study that escalate in complexity as the students progress through the programme. This encourages students to develop their own CPD.

All assessments follow a rigorous internal and external moderation process, approved by the partner universities, to ensure that assessments accurately measure achievement of the stated learning outcomes. Feedback to students always refers to the stated learning outcomes and assessment criteria, as shown in marked student work. Feedback is constructive and aims to motivate students. The motivational impact was confirmed by the students who were interviewed.

Informal feedback is provided orally, and formal feedback is in writing. Students are encouraged to consider recommendations made and to take account of the advice provided. This ensures students receive appropriate and constructive guidance on what they have achieved and how they can make improvements.

The revalidation of programmes at least every five years ensures there is a comprehensive review of all modules and programme content and materials. This ensures that programmes are refreshed and continue to meet market demand.

MC has high-quality facilities, including workshops, laboratories and IT equipment, which all support and enhance teaching. The comprehensive student portal provides staff and students with additional teaching materials and other learning resources within MC's library and on partner universities' learning platforms. This all helps to enhance the student learning experience and encourages students to meet their own learning objectives effectively.

4.4 Student Support, Guidance and Progression (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Students receive pastoral support that is appropriate to their age, background and circumstances. Each student is provided with a Personal Academic Tutor (PAT) within four weeks of enrolment. Where necessary, students may be referred to appropriate support services, such as professional counselling, where staff at MC are unable to address the issues presented. Students confirm that they receive excellent pastoral support.

The comprehensive induction programme provides guidance on the pastoral support available and out-of-hours contact details. This is also available on the student portal and the VLE. MC's policy on the avoidance of discrimination and procedures for addressing abusive behaviour is contained in the student handbook and covered at induction.

There are effective, robust arrangements in place to protect students from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. The Institution's behaviour policy covers radicalisation and extremism, and a comprehensive risk assessment is in place. The Institution has produced a comprehensive safety guide that encompasses policy, risk assessment and staff training relating to potentially dangerous situations, including the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Well qualified staff, which have roles connected with student welfare, have had appropriate awareness training relating to radicalisation and extremism. The training has been disseminated to all staff with an instruction to report any concerns to their line manager.

Programme leaders and personal academic tutors are in close contact with teaching staff to quickly identify students needing extra academic support. Formative assessment results that are unsatisfactory will lead to staff discussion with the relevant students. Thus, students receive speedy advice on how to improve their academic performance. If the support provided does not lead to an improvement in performance, guidance on changing programmes or ultimately leaving the Institution is made available. This enables students to make informed decisions about their continuing education.

Prospective students are asked to provide information on any special educational needs they may have from the outset, and appropriate support is put in place if possible. In accordance with its policy on inclusivity, MC makes every effort to provide educational and physical support to such students.

Appropriate information on living and travelling in Greece is provided to international students. Such information includes regional travel, accommodation, banking, shopping and local amenities. A week-long orientation event is provided, and this forms a key part of international students' introduction to Greece and MC in particular. This enhances their confidence in living and studying in a foreign country.

Attendance and punctuality are taken very seriously by MC. Students are made aware of the causal link between high attendance and academic success. MC's priority is to identify students who are at risk following weak attendance so that support and pastoral guidance can be provided. This is part of MC's approach of instilling in students their responsibility for their own learning.

PATs and Programme Leaders are made aware of students with poor attendance, and arrangements are made to hold personal meetings with them. No student is permitted to enter a class ten minutes after its start time, and any student who does so will be recorded in the register as being absent. Attendance and punctuality are monitored carefully in accordance with partner universities' requirements.

Class registers are taken and entered in the Registry's database. Programme Leaders receive weekly reports on attendance from Registry and take an escalating series of actions for persistent absence, culminating in a personal meeting.

4.5 Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Access to the premises is secure. Students and staff access the campus using their MC identity (ID) cards. A security officer has the authority to ask staff and students to show their ID cards, and to meet visitors and make sure they are attended to by appropriate staff members.

The library is well stocked with books, periodicals, journals and online resources that meet staff and student needs and support MC's programmes effectively. Staff and students can access the online resources of partner universities through dedicated terminals. These arrangements enhance teaching, learning and research activities.

An annual review cycle ensures that the library stock is current and provides additional resources to meet demand. This ensures that library stock is kept up to date. MC responds positively to requests for new library resources to be made available.

There are extensive IT facilities available for students' use. In addition to the normal computer laboratories, there are specialist laboratories, satellite television and multimedia teaching facilities available. Wireless internet connectivity is extensive and effective in supporting students' use of their own IT equipment.

There are many online resources available through the VLE and the MC intranet portal to facilitate interaction between students and staff. An IT induction is available to staff and students, and ongoing IT training is available throughout the academic year. As a result, the staff and students are well supported in their use of IT.

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

As well as feedback from students, MC obtains the views of staff, sector professionals and partner universities, particularly when considering changes to programme content and delivery. Revalidation and franchise extension processes are also a valuable source of stakeholder feedback.

MC employs various methods of obtaining feedback from students. In addition to conversations with staff, students complete module evaluation questionnaires of the partner universities each semester, and there is an MC-wide student satisfaction questionnaire that concentrates on teaching, learning facilities and the overall student experience.

Questionnaire results are collated, analysed and presented to the quality assurance department, as evidenced in analyses made available for the inspection. The results are presented and discussed with Programme Leaders and Deans, and recommendations feed into staff development as appropriate. This leads to enhancement of delivery through improvements in modules and augmenting staff capability. Written feedback is provided to students, who confirm that they are kept informed of the actions taken in response to their comments to the Institution.

The comprehensive annual programme monitoring reports, which include student feedback, are discussed at programme committee meetings that are attended by student representatives. The programme committees provide an opportunity for students to air their views on content and delivery, thereby enabling their comments to be recorded and subsequently acted upon.

Quality management processes and procedures are contained in the quality management systems manual, staff handbooks and the intranet portal and are referred to in student handbooks. The overall quality management process is reviewed as part of the strategic planning process. The main purpose of the process is to ensure that MC meets the requirements of the partner universities in providing a high-quality learning experience for students.

The quality assurance department aims to ensure that a quality ethos pervades all aspects of the Institution's activities. This is achieved by evaluating all aspects of provision and instilling a sense of ownership among staff. This fosters a sense of collegiality across the Institution.

The quality of the student learning experience is reviewed carefully and addressed by action taken in response to student feedback. Programme delivery emphasises self-motivation and development, thereby encouraging student-centred learning and enhancing the learning experience.

The quality assurance department produces an annual action plan that draws from the annual monitoring review, research undertaken, resourcing and other measures of institutional performance against KPIs. The report is presented to the Board of Directors and forms the basis of its strategic review of the Institution, highlighting where improvements need to be made. The action plan is followed up annually.

The annual review processes and reports systematically lead to the identification of areas where provision can be improved and consequently the student experience enhanced. The partner universities also require MC to set out areas where the student experience has been enhanced and where further improvements can be made. This forms a valuable monitor of MC's overall performance.

4.7 Online, Distance and Blended Learning (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

Staff have a good understanding of online teaching delivery and receive appropriate training. This includes the needs of students studying online, the methods and techniques of delivery, and the effective use of technological resources.

4.8 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The strong senior management team has a clear focus on the strategic development of the Institution, which ensures that it is maintaining high quality in its delivery.

Robust administrative systems enable the Institution to function efficiently and effectively through the provision of appropriate and timely information to senior management and the provision of effective quality assurance processes.

Excellent academic staff operate in a collegiate atmosphere, which enhances their delivery and encourages students to achieve their academic objectives.

Very comprehensive pastoral support enables students to receive appropriate help and guidance when needed so that they can concentrate on their studies.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

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

None

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

BAC OFFICE USE ONLY:

THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:

Richard Smith

Lead Inspector