

# ASSESSMENT REPORT

Accreditation of OSCE Border Security and Management for Senior Leadership (BSMSL) Course

**Institution: OSCE BORDER MANAGEMENT STAFF COLLEGE (BMSC)**

## Assessment committee:

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**Coordinator:** Dr Maiki Udam

**Dates of the assessment visit:** 23-24 October, 2017

**Assessment committee sent the preliminary report to EKKA:** 8 November 2017

**Assessment committee received the comments of the institution under accreditation:** 22 November 2017

**Assessment committee approved the final version of component assessment with 3 votes in favour and 0 votes against.**

**Date:** 27 November 2017

**Component assessment (mark with 'X'):**

	<b>CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>PARTALLY CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>DOES NOT CONFORM TO REQUIREMENTS</b>
<b>STUDY PROGRAMME AND STUDY PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT</b>	X		
<b>LEARNING AND TEACHING</b>		X	
<b>TEACHING STAFF</b>	X		
<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	X		
<b>RESOURCES</b>	X		

**COMMENTS:**

The OSCE Border Security and Management for Senior Leadership (BSMSL) Course (the study programme, called course in the College) is based in the Border Management Staff College (BMSC) which is located in the compound of the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The College's remit is to provide professional development for 57 OSCE participating states and 11 Partners for Cooperation. It operates within an environment where it has to balance educational needs and principles with the requirements of the OSCE as the funder. This can pose a challenge to course development and delivery.

The BSMSL course, which was established as a joint training initiative, is a core course offered by the College and enjoys priority status for funding. The course built on the expertise and experience of BMSC, and the Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) Border Security Programme. It aims to further develop the professional competencies of border security agency managers from across the OSCE area; to

provide a platform for the exchange of experience, the enhancement of knowledge, analytical, conceptual and strategic management skills, and to improve border security systems. The course has been developed to meet the Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) for Border Guarding which is owned and published by Frontex and benchmarked to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The course consists of three 10 ECTS credit modules, delivered through a mix of e-learning and face-to-face learning followed by a Course Work/dissertation worth 30 ECTS credits. The three modules are delivered over a one year period. Each module starts with an eight-week e-learning phase, followed by a ten days' face-to-face learning. Induction is held over two days in Dushanbe. The face-to-face element of the first module, Modern Security Challenges and Border Management, is held in The Austrian Academy of the Ministry of Finance in Vienna; the face-to-face element of the second module, Leadership and Management, is held in the Staff College in Dushanbe, and the third module's face-to-face element is delivered in a Border Guard Education institution on the external EU border, such as the Finnish Academy of Border and Coast Guard, Imatra Finland and the Polish Training Centre, Ketrzyn, Poland. At the time of the Assessment Committee visit the course had been delivered twice, the first cohort completed the course in September 2015 and the second in September 2017. The self-evaluation report (SER) stated that in total, there had been 49 participants from seventeen countries who had attended have the course, the college reported 39. No course was offered in 2017-2018. Course intakes are scheduled for 2018-2019 and 2020-2021.

The BSMSL course is funded by OSCE and cofounded by the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). There is no cost directly to participants or to the participants' delegating country; OSCE covers travel to the course locations, field trips, and all accommodation and subsistence. OSCE also pays for the staff costs, including the travel and accommodation of all teaching staff (called experts in the College).

The course is managed by the College; the programme leader reports to the Director of the BMSC and to the Head of OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Mission on the campus in Dushanbe. The OSCE Academic Advisory Board, on which representatives from the affiliated international organisations and educational institutions sit, gives advice on the course and has responsibility for the approval of the curriculum.

In the view of the Assessment Committee the SER was well structured and gave an accurate picture of the course, identifying key features as well as some perceived areas of weakness. Whilst the picture was accurate, there were relatively few examples given to back up the evaluative statements.

The Assessment Committee appreciated the positive way that the College responded to the visit, engaging fully in discussion and providing additional documentation when requested. This greatly facilitated the work of the Committee.

#### **COMMENDATIONS:**

- The synchronous dual language delivery of the course is distinctive and enhances the learning opportunities for participants.
- The wide range of stakeholder views that are taken into consideration in the design and development of the curriculum.
- The appropriate benchmarking of the course design and delivery to level 7 of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework (SQF) for Border Guarding, which corresponds to level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).
- The wide range of international expertise engaged in the design and delivery of the course which provides a rich and up-to-date learning experience.
- The College's responsiveness to the feedback from participants.
- The appropriate balance of academics and practitioners who contribute to the course delivery.

- The range of communication and frequency of exchanges across the staff team which supports the smooth delivery of the course.
- The elicitation and use of feedback from participants, staff, alumni and stakeholders in enhancing provision.
- The resources which support the learning and teaching, especially the technical resources for the delivery of the dual language delivery of the course.
- The extensive nature of the administrative and technical support for the course.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The OSCE Academic Advisory Board should formally approve changes to the curriculum and these should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- The College should review the balance between the modules of the course to ensure they are confident that each module has an appropriate level of student workload for the number of ECTS credits assigned.
- The College should make explicit, in each assessment, which learning outcomes are being tested. This should be clearly communicated to both participants and staff.
- The College should review all the assessments and ensure that assessment criteria relate directly to the learning outcomes for that assessment.
- The College should provide clear guidance on how to articulate the level of attainment for any one assessment criterion and ensure that this is applied as consistently as possible across the diversity of assessment types. A consistent marking scheme should be adopted across the course.
- The College should provide written guidance to participants and staff about the rules and regulations related to assessment.

- The Assessment Committee recommends that the College should provide full, written information about the course rules and regulations and make this easily accessible to both participants and staff. This could be helpfully presented and disseminated together with all existing information about the course.
- The College should consider providing guidance as to the maximum number of Course Work drafts that a mentor/supervisor may comment on. The guidance should be formalised and provided together with other information and guidance about the course.

The College may also like to consider the following points:

- Clarify the use of the terms formative and summative assessment and how these are used in the assessments at module level.
- Review the terms used for the sheet used to record the marks and use only one consistently across the course.
- Address the inconsistency in scales used in different feedback questionnaires to provide transparency and support consistency in analysis.

**ASSESSMENT AREAS:**

1. STUDY PROGRAMME AND STUDY PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT	CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS	PARTIALLY CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS	DOES NOT CONFORM TO REQUIREMENTS
<p><i>Educational needs of (different) target groups as well as results of educational and societal trends and market research are used for developing educational offer. Objectives, expectations, requirements of stakeholders are identified and defined. The goals and content of the learning offer are relevant for the target group, they are tailored to the needs of participants.</i></p> <p><i>Relevant stakeholders, e.g current and former participants, teachers/trainers, funders and other relevant stakeholders are involved in the development of the educational offer. The study programme development takes into account feedback from participants, employers, and other stakeholders.</i></p> <p><i>Learning outcomes, including transversal skills, are clearly defined, match the educational goals and, if applicable, are linked with current professional practice. The content and structure of the study programme are consistent with its objectives and learning outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>Different parts of the study programme are logically integrated and form a coherent whole.</i></p> <p><i>E-learning and blended learning offers are developed to cater to the needs and requirements of participants and also to reach out to geographically dispersed target groups, if applicable.</i></p>			
<p>The curriculum for the Border Security and Management for Senior Leadership Course was developed by the course management team in the College. The team started with materials from three pre-existing courses of DCAF. To ensure that the new course met the needs of the target group, consultations were undertaken with a range of stakeholders, especially from OSCE participating states, at, for example, the OSCE Focal Meeting in Vienna, and advice was also gained from the OSCE Academic Advisory Board (AAB). The College distributes an impact evaluation questionnaire to delegating agencies and alumni six months after the end of the course. Analysis of these demonstrated that the course content meets the needs of the participants and the employer organisations.</p> <p>Feedback from the first cohort, from the full range of stakeholder organisations and insight from the monitoring of trends and developments related to modern security challenges feed into revisions and developments of the curriculum. For example, the Assessment Committee found evidence of feedback influencing a shift away from the focus on illegal migration to the analytical subject of terrorism. The curriculum was also changed in the light of feedback from stakeholder agencies so that there was increased content focussing on the area of customs. Some content on border security was moved from the third to the first module in the light of feedback.</p> <p>In discussion with teaching staff and course management, the Assessment Committee learned that module leaders play a major role in the development of the curriculum through material preparation both for the e-learning and the face-to-face phases of the modules. The work of revising and updating these materials takes place after the completion of the course by one cohort. Interviews with alumni confirmed the relevance</p>			

of the materials for the curriculum.

Post e-learning, post-module and end-of-course evaluation questionnaires are distributed to participants and include questions focussing on the curriculum content. Analysis of these, as well as feedback from delegating agencies and partner organisations demonstrated that the course both meets the needs of the target groups and that stakeholder groups have been involved in the development and revisions to the curriculum to ensure that it remains current and relevant to the changing context of border security.

As well as providing valuable advice and input into the curriculum, the Academic Advisory Board is also responsible for approving the curriculum and changes to it. Minutes of one AAB seen by the Assessment Committee evidenced discussion of the curriculum. However, no evidence was seen to show that the AAB had discussed and formally approved the curriculum and any changes to it. The Assessment Committee recommends that the AAB clearly approves the curriculum and any changes to it and the approval and any related decisions are formally recorded in the minutes of AAB meetings.

The learning outcomes for the course are clearly stated. By the end of the course participants are expected to be able to:

- Analyse contemporary security issues helping to detect possible border security threats;
- Implement the OSCE Border Security and Management Concept and its principles in practice;
- Examine and learn modern technologies, methods, and techniques in border security and management including best practices at border crossing points, customs procedures and trade facilitation;
- Introduce proposals and possible solutions aiming to address modern security challenges and to fulfil international obligations;
- Understand the role of a manager in organisational development and the importance of leadership skills and tools for competent and ethical implementation of duties;
- Apply risk management, crime intelligence and investigation tools and techniques in daily work.

The self-evaluation report (SER) states that the Course is equivalent to masters level; masters level meets level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). A document showing a comparison of competences defined in the Sectoral Qualification Framework (SQF) for Border Guarding and the learning outcomes of the curriculum was presented. The SQF for border guarding is issued by the Frontex Agency and is a framework of high-level learning outcomes that reflect all the academic education and training in the border guard field. As an overarching frame of reference, the SQF encompasses all levels of qualification acquired in general, vocational and academic education and training in the border guard field. The SQF was developed on the basis of an extensive job mapping for all border guard tasks at all levels, and thus closes the gap between theory and practice and ensures that all training courses aligned to it are operationally relevant. The SQF has, at its core, the concept of 'professional learning' which



describes the knowledge, skills and competences transferable to a workplace that are relevant for the job. The SQF levels are pegged to the EQF levels. Analysis of the comparison document, scrutiny of the curriculum documents including the course plan and the module descriptions, of training session outlines and of completed course work assessments evidenced that the learning outcomes and their achievement are at SQF, and hence EQF, level 7. From interviews during the Assessment Committee's visit and from course documentation it was clear that the learning outcomes for the course are applicable at the practical level.

BMSC senior management confirmed that approval for using of SQF had been received from the Frontex Agency.

The curriculum is made up of three modules: Modern Security Challenges and Border Management; Management and Leadership; and Current and Emerging Trends in Border Security Management and a final Course Work. Ten ECTS credits are assigned to each of the modules and thirty ECTS credits to the Course Work. Scrutiny of the curriculum documentation, including the module guides, showed that learning outcomes are appropriately distributed across the three modules and across the e-learning and the face-to-face phases. Evidence from the post-course evaluation showed that the learning outcomes related clearly to the professional development of the participants; alumni confirmed their satisfaction with the level and focus of the modules and the associated learning outcomes.

Scrutiny of the e-learning environment and of the curriculum documents showed that content and structure are well-defined and that overall the course has a logically integrated structure. The first module focusses on security at global, regional and national levels and links with border security and modern threats to security. The second module provides insight into the development of strategies and how these strategies can be implemented from a leadership and management perspective, acquainting the participants with managerial skills and knowledge that are essential for the development of border management organisations, including the planning of activities within an organisation in the context of command and control, motivation and feedback. The third module explores different elements of border management systems and trade facilitation and expands practical skills in the critical evaluation of the functioning of border management and control systems. Within the modules, the content of the e-learning phase provides a basis of knowledge and understanding for the subsequent phase of the module so that there is coherent progression within each module as well as between the modules. Whilst the modules build coherently on each other, interviews with management and teaching staff, feedback questionnaires and module descriptions indicated an imbalance in the workload required of participants in the modules. In particular, the first module presented a larger workload than either the second or the third module. Student workload should be appropriate for the number of credits assigned to each module. The Assessment Committee recommends that the College review the balance between the modules so that they are confident that each module has an appropriate level of student workload for the number of ECTS credits assigned.

The e learning elements of the curriculum are located on the BSMSL web-based Learning Content Management System (ILIAS) which was developed

and is maintained by DCAF. The College further developed the content of the e-lessons. A detailed review of ILIAS showed that the website is accessible and very well structured; the interface is user-friendly and offers good guidance through the main menus and options; the e-learning platforms provide various options for supporting the participants and guiding them in both technical and content-related points; the content is structured logically following the course curriculum and has been appropriately adapted for e-learning requirements. The platform is designed from readymade learning materials and is vital for developing and levelling participants' knowledge before the face-to-face activities. The e-learning phase includes readings, forums, tests and quizzes appropriate for the level of the course. The review also showed that the content uploaded to the e-learning platform is up-to-date. Evidence from the e-learning evaluation section of the post-course questionnaire showed how informative, comprehensive and time-consuming e-learning was for the participants as well as how well it contributes to their understanding of the classroom activity. It is evident that the e-learning phases are relevant and appropriate and add value to the overall course.

2. LEARNING AND TEACHING	CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS	PARTIALLY CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS	DOES NOT CONFORM TO REQUIREMENTS
<p><i>Modern teaching methods with a strong participant orientation are used in teaching. They are adapted to the needs and experiences of adult learners.</i></p> <p><i>Teaching content and learning process are linked to the learning outcomes on the respective level of the EQF, if applicable.</i></p> <p><i>Teaching and learning materials (including e-learning materials) are up-to-date and appropriate to achieve learning outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>Assessment of learning outcomes (including recognition of prior learning and work experience) is transparent and objective.</i></p> <p><i>The teaching process includes self-assessment and a formative performance assessment, i.e an analysis of the individual student in his/her learning development.</i></p> <p><i>Participants' reflective feedback on process and outcome is gleaned on a regular basis.</i></p>			
<p>The course is delivered through a variety of teaching and learning methods which includes individual learning in an electronic environment, face-to-face sessions such as lectures, group work, seminars, case work and field trips. The synchronous dual language delivery is a distinctive aspect of the course which enhances the learning opportunities for participants. The range of teaching is clearly valued by participants as evidenced in the BSMSL feedback sheets and analysis report, and is appropriate for the participant profile and the level of the course.</p> <p>From discussions with staff and alumni it was evident that the teaching was interactive and engaged participants in an appropriate level of challenge. All face-to-face sessions are delivered simultaneously in Russian and English. On-line discussions are translated so that all participants have access to all the on-line exchanges, irrespective of their language knowledge. This dual language delivery further supports the challenge to participants and enriches the interaction between peers across cultures and language.</p> <p>As evidenced in discussions with the course management and the module leaders, one of the module leaders' main tasks is the updating of materials. The curriculum documentation includes the reading lists for each module and these are entirely appropriate for the course. New materials</p>			

are uploaded onto the e-learning platform and are easily accessible to participants. The e-learning material reviewed demonstrated that this was current and relevant. The BSMSL feedback analysis reports showed that participants were fully satisfied with the relevance and availability of materials. The materials are available in parallel for both Russian and English. Some documents and materials which are only available in one language are either translated by the College or, where available, an equivalent article or book is provided in the other language.

The Curriculum Document included an assessment strategy which outlines the kinds of assessment and a summary of the skills that assessment is designed to address. The strategy states that both formative and summative assessments are used. It was not clear from documentation or from discussions with the course management how the terms formative and summative are interpreted in the College and whether some assessments are formative only. It would be helpful for the College to clarify their interpretation of formative and summative and how the assessments at module level relate to formative and summative assessment.

The course uses a good range of assessment methods including multiple choice tests, presentations of individual and group work, project plans, essays and a synoptic course work/dissertation which forms the final phase of the course. Taken together, the range and type of assessment are appropriate for testing the learning outcomes. The curriculum documents outline the assessment type and the weighting of the assessments within the overall module. It was evident from the curriculum documentation that there was no explicit, written information showing which learning outcomes a particular assessment addressed. The College should make explicit in each assessment which learning outcomes are being tested. This should be made clear to both participants and staff.

Mark sheets are used by the markers. However, these are called different things, evaluation report, marking scheme, grading sheet, for example. It would be helpful to use one term for the sheet that markers use to ensure this is clear to both staff and participants.

The mark sheets include some assessment criteria. The assessment criteria are largely appropriate to the level of the course; however, they are not directly related to the learning outcomes. Some mark sheets provide guidance for the level of attainment and some do not. With the number of staff engaged in assessment and marking and the dispersed nature of the course and staff cohorts, this is an area of vulnerability and renders assessment less objective than it should be. The College should review all the assessments and ensure that assessment criteria relate directly to the learning outcomes for that assessment. The College should also provide direct guidance of the level of attainment and ensure this is as consistent as possible across the diversity of assessment types.

The marking schemes apply different grading approaches including marks out of 60, numerical grades 1 to 5, literal grades A to G and percentages. This is confusing and presents a challenge for providing an aggregated mark for the module. The senior staff reported that they have not yet had any

requests for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) although it is, in principle, possible. If a request were made, having a consistent approach to grading would ease the process. A consistent approach to grading would also support participants, who, for whatever reason, had to interrupt their studies and wished either to return to the College or continue study elsewhere. The Assessment Committee advised the College to adopt a consistent approach to marking schemes for the course.

From a review of the documents and from interviews with the course management and teaching staff, no consistent picture of the rules about assessment were gained. It was not clear, for example, how many times an assessment could be taken nor what would happen if, for example, a participant failed one of the on-line tests. The College should address this and provide written guidance to participants and staff about the rules and regulations related to assessment. These could be helpfully collected together and distributed with all other course information.

As evidenced by the self-feedback sheets on the Course Work/dissertation, for example, participants' self-reflection on their progress and achievement is undertaken. During the modules, participants are asked for feedback and teaching staff provide guidance to students on their progress. Alumni reported that they were given helpful feedback both electronically during the e-learning and follow-up phases, and orally during the face-to-face study blocks. The feedback supported their learning. The College asks for daily feedback during the face-to-face blocks, responding to the participants the following day. This is excellent practice. However, the Assessment Committee noted that different scales are used within and between the different feedback questionnaires. For example, in one case 1 is the best and the weakest in another. This College is encouraged to address this to provide transparency and to support the consistency of analysis.

3. TEACHING STAFF	CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS	PARTIALLY CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS	DOES NOT CONFORM TO REQUIREMENTS
<p><i>There is teaching staff with adequate qualifications to achieve the objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme, and to ensure quality and sustainability of the learning and teaching.</i></p> <p><i>Practitioners participate in teaching the study programme.</i></p> <p><i>The teaching staff is engaged in professional and teaching-skills development.</i></p> <p><i>The teaching staff periodically review their performance, development and training needs.</i></p> <p><i>Institutional structures and means of communication, information and cooperation ensure a good working climate and foster teamwork, including team-teaching, among teaching staff.</i></p>			
<p>According to the information in the self-assessment report and based on the CV-s presented during the visit, teaching staff have sufficient qualifications and experience to enable them to deliver the learning outcomes of the course. The teaching staff consists of both academic staff and</p>			

practitioners with very significant academic, pedagogic and practical experience. The CVs presented showed that the module leaders have either a PhD or a masters degrees; a number of the visiting staff also hold masters and some PhDs. All teaching staff have extensive professional experience, with an average of over twenty years. This provides valuable and relevant knowledge in academic and operational areas. The senior management reported a ratio of academics to practitioners of about 60 to 40. The Assessment Committee confirmed that this was an appropriate balance for the course.

The staffing of the course includes both the core teaching staff from BMSC and a significant number of visiting lecturers from many OSCE member states. Visiting lecturers may contribute only one or two sessions whilst others may make a more significant contribution. All teaching staff have direct links to the area of border security, which provides outstanding experience and knowledge in the delivery of the course. As evidenced by the written feedback questionnaires and the overall analysis scores, participants value very highly the teaching staff's competence, knowledge, communication skills and ability to create a good learning environment as well as their capacity to provide relevant and helpful feedback. The wide range of highly informed and knowledgeable international experts involved in the course delivery is a major strength and supports the sharing of best international practice.

The SER provides information and examples of how the BSMSL core teaching staff are involved in the further enhancement of their qualifications, through, for example, training in course design and delivery. The College is not in a position to offer formal training opportunities for visiting teaching staff as OSCE is unable to finance it. However, the College Management set high criteria for the recruitment of visiting staff who are selected from the OSCE database on the basis that they already have the relevant competence and skills needed for effective course delivery. From discussions with module leaders, teaching staff and the course management, it was clear that all staff engage in peer support and exchange views and expertise in the development and delivery of the course. The teaching staff come together twice a year and the Assessment Committee saw evidence of team teaching. These activities combine to provide good support to the enhancement of the teaching staff's skills and knowledge.

The College has a Performance Evaluation Form which is completed for those staff hired under special service agreements. Scrutiny of the forms showed that teaching staff are assessed in five categories: expertise in the subject area; initiative; quality of work; interpersonal skills and timeliness. The completed forms seen by the Assessment Committee showed that most teaching staff received maximum ratings. The senior management provided an example of how they had addressed a weakness in the performance of one member of staff.

In addition to the performance management forms, there is an extensive feedback system which engages stakeholders, including participants, course managers, and border security agencies. The questionnaires elicit, among other things, feedback on the performance of teachers. The analysis of the feedback from stakeholders showed an average score of 95 with the satisfaction of the efficiency of classroom studies, lectures, group work, presentations, assessment of teaching, coaching and tutoring. Written feedback showed that in the majority of cases participants are highly satisfied with the teaching staff, the course structure and content, the teaching materials, face-to-face learning and e-learning. The results of feedback gained about teaching staff is reviewed by the course management and actions for improvement are taken.

Full time staff employed by the College engage in OSCE’s Talent Management System which evaluates the effectiveness of staff performance. This covers both the course management team and the course administrators.

It was clear to the Assessment Committee from interviews with staff and alumni that an appropriate range of communication channels are used to support effective communication. This include face-to-face meetings, conference calls, Skype meetings and e mail discussions. Staff reported that they appreciated the exchange of ideas and expertise and the support gained through communication. The teamwork is greatly appreciated by the staff team and contributes to the smooth delivery of the course.

<b>4. PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>PARTIALLY CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>DOES NOT CONFORM TO REQUIREMENTS</b>
<p><i>Existing competencies and qualifications of participants are assessed and adequate placement is provided.</i></p> <p><i>Both the graduates of the study programmes and their employers are satisfied with their professional preparation and social competencies of the graduates.</i></p> <p><i>Detailed information on the educational offer (course programme) is made available to the potential participants. It is spread sufficiently ahead of time before the start of courses.</i></p> <p><i>Counselling and instruction respect adults’ needs.</i></p>			
<p>From the documentation seen and from discussions with the course managers, the Assessment Committee learned that the course is announced three months before it is due to start. Letters of invitation are sent to the heads of all the OSCE delegations in Vienna, who then forward the invitations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of each participating country who further forward the information to relevant agencies. The information sent includes</p>			

a detailed course description with the time-table. The educational offer is presented in the OSCE Advisory Board to all stakeholders and published in the College's annual course catalogue. Alumni also disseminate information about the course. From the interviews conducted with alumni, it was clear that the information distributed enables prospective participants to make an informed choice about applying for the course.

The selection of participants is a two-stage process. OSCE participating states nominate eligible candidates from across their agencies. BMSC then assesses the competencies and qualifications of the candidates. The College evaluates the applications against qualifications, motivation, analytical skills and readiness to participate in the course using defined educational and professional requirements. The process is based on clear criteria and is transparent. The Assessment Committee learned that some teaching staff considered that not all participants were at an equivalent level. This was attributed to their different cultural backgrounds, work and educational experience. Evidence from the meeting with senior management suggested that the challenge posed by the different levels and backgrounds of the participants could be used to advantage in the learning experience.

Competition for entering the programme is growing. The second cohort of 25 was selected from 35 applicants and there are already enquiries for the next cohort.

Both alumni and employers are satisfied with the skills, knowledge and competencies achieved on the course. Alumni gave examples of how they had gained promotion after completing the course. Feedback from the delegating agencies showed that the professional capacity of participants had strengthened and their overall competence was enhanced. From meetings with both alumni and delegating agencies it was clear that the professional skills, knowledge and competencies of the graduates meet the needs and expectations of the employers.

It was clear from interviews with staff and alumni that participants have access to adequate academic support. This is given both face-to-face and on line throughout the e-learning and follow up stages of the modules and during the Course Work phase. The course management team follow up with participants and alert them to deadlines. However, the Assessment Committee could not find any evidence of written information about the rules and regulations of the course including information about progression. No information was available to indicate, for example, whether students can take leave of absence, what the attendance requirements are and what happens if these are not met. The Assessment Committee recommends that the College provides full, written information about the course rules and regulations and disseminates this to both participants and staff. This could be helpfully presented together with all existing information about the course.

From interviews with stakeholders and alumni and from feedback questionnaires, it is clear that participants receive frequent and responsive advice and guidance on their academic progress which reflects well the student-centered approach of the College. The advice is given face-to-face and

electronically. The Assessment Committee learned in interview with the course managers that there is no restriction on the amount of feedback participants can receive. For example, participants can submit multiple drafts of the Course Work to their tutor. However, there is a risk attached to providing unlimited access to support particularly at a level of study where participants should be able to assess the readiness of a piece of work for submission themselves. There is also a risk that the work begins to be as much that of the supervisor as of the participant. The Assessment Committee advises the College to consider providing guidance as to the maximum number of drafts of the Course Work that a mentor/supervisor may comment on. This guidance should be formalised and provided together with other information and guidance about the course to both participants and teaching staff.

5. RESOURCES	CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS	PARTIALLY CONFORMS TO REQUIREMENTS	DOES NOT CONFORM TO REQUIREMENTS
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*Resources (infrastructure, facilities and equipment, learning and teaching materials, financial resources) support the achievement of objectives in the study programme.  
Resource development is sustainable.*

The Assessment Committee viewed the premises during the visit and it was clear that the premises in the Staff College meet the needs of the course. There are three classrooms, the largest of which has the capacity to cater for up to 70 participants. The classrooms are adaptable for the range of teaching and learning activities used on the course. There is also a computer lab with 12 desktop computers connected to the internet which is sufficient for activities that require the use of IT and on-line environment. The library at the College has space for private study.

The classrooms are well equipped and fully support the requirements of the course for the simultaneous presentation of teaching sessions in Russian and English. The classrooms have three screens, a conference audio system, a centralised command system headphones with wires reception and interpreting booths. Most of the equipment can be moved from one classroom to another as required. The hardware is supported by strong IT and administrative resources and the dual language facility by a team of interpreters who provide twenty-four-hour coverage.

The library contains approximately 6400 publications, books and other reference materials related to border security and management and are held in both English and Russian. Where a specific resource is available only in one language, it is translated into the other. Course management provides copies to the participants and ensures that copyright law is respected in all cases. The majority of the teaching and learning resources are stored in the web-based Learning Content Management System (ILIAS). The resources fully meet the needs of participants and are accessible to them.

Evidence from participant feedback demonstrates that premises and resources in the other two locations used for the face-to-face delivery are fully



satisfactory.

Administrative, IT and technical translation and interpretation support is provided by the College. The College can also access administrative support from the OSCE offices. Staff, participants and agency representatives were positive in their evaluation of the administrative and infrastructural support. Feedback evidenced the logistical support for field visits. Participants' feedback showed full satisfaction with the transportation accommodation, location, hotel services and food provided during the face-to-face phases of the course.

The College premises are owned by OSCE which fully funds the course including staff and participants' subsistence and accommodation, field trips and travel. The College is fully aware that there is a potential risk attached to the financing of the course with sole reliance on OSCE. The senior management of the College is seeking to mitigate this potential risk and are currently in negotiation with DCAF as well as seeking funding from other donors.