

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

MID-WAY PROBATION REVIEW (Independent Higher Education)

INSTITUTION: London College of Contemporary Arts

ADDRESS: 9 Holborn
London
EC1N 2LL

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr Sagi Hartov

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Probation accreditation

DATE OF INSPECTION: 22 August 2018

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 29 November 2018

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

The London College of Contemporary Arts (LCCA/the Institution) is a privately-owned higher education provider, located in Holborn in the City of London. It is a specialist institution which delivers courses in fashion, visual arts and media, and business and hospitality. LCCA aims to provide creative, innovative and industry focused programmes that enable students to shape their future in employment.

LCCA was established in October 2016 as an independently run entity under Global University Systems (GUS), which is the parent company. The Institution is led by a Managing Director (MD) who also acts as Executive Dean. This role is supported by a Senior Management Team (SMT). The MD reports to the LCCA Board, which is chaired by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of GUS.

GUS provides payroll, human resources, finance and legal services as well as access to administrative staff. GUS also determines the constitutional governance structure and policies in a number of areas.

2. Brief description of the current provision

LCCA's provision ranges from programmes at level three to level seven. It offers six Bachelor of Arts (BA) programmes, three Master of Arts (MA) programmes, six Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Higher National Diplomas (HND), one foundation programme and 14 short courses and continuing professional development (CPD) programmes.

The Institution works in partnership with Walsall College for the delivery of the HNCs and HNDs. It also works with OCN London in relation to its Access to Higher Education (HE) programmes. LCCA has franchise agreements with Mod'Art International, Paris for the BAs in Luxury and Fashion Business and Marketing and Fashion Design and with the Ecole D'Art Maryse Eloy (EME) Paris for the BA in Graphic Design.

LCCA has franchise arrangements with the University of East London to offer two top-up BAs in Hospitality Management and Business Management and also with Buckinghamshire New University for two full and top-up BA degree programmes in Fashion Design and Graphic Design. It also has a validation agreement with Università Telematica Internazionale Uninettuno, Rome for the delivery of the three MA programmes. At the time of the inspection, the agreement with Università Telematica Internazionale Uninettuno, Rome had been extended. A partnership agreement to offer a beauty course with Champneys Beauty College was discontinued in July 2017.

At the time of the inspection, there were 437 students enrolled on 38 courses. Of the 437 students, 13 were studying part-time. There is an equal proportion of male and female students. Around half of the students are United Kingdom (UK) nationals and half are European nationals who already live and work in the UK. At the time of the inspection, there were no students under the age of 18. Students must meet standard published entry requirements to enrol on each course.

3. Inspection process

The inspection took place over one day. The inspection was undertaken by one inspector, who met with the MD and other senior leaders. Evidence documentation was scrutinised in relation to the actions and recommendations raised at the last inspection. Meetings were held with teaching staff and course and programme leaders and managers. The Institution co-operated fully with the inspection.

4. Inspection history

Full inspection:

23-24 November 2017

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments 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 previous inspection, all activity, both academic and administrative, takes place at the dedicated premises located at 9 Holborn in central London. Additional office accommodation has been created on the top floor of the premises to provide permanent and associate teaching staff with appropriate working areas. Administration and support staff are now also accommodated within the sole premises.

Two new franchise agreements are in place with the University of East London and Buckinghamshire New University. There is no longer a partnership agreement with Champneys Beauty College to offer beauty courses.

2. Response to actions points in last report

1.3 LCCA must clarify the organisational structure and make it internally consistent in order to provide clarity of the relationship between governance and management.

Leaders have updated the LCCA organisation chart which better clarifies the organisational structure. The structure clearly identifies the relationship between governance committee structures, as well as the functional units which are not directly managed and overseen by LCCA staff, but which provide central support services. The Quality Handbook highlights the remit and membership of committees.

1.5 The LCCA Board must develop and own the risk strategy in order to ensure the probity of the Institution.

Risk is systematically reviewed and evaluated by the LCCA senior management team and Board, with additional oversight from the Chief Executive of GUS. A detailed risk assessment plan and risk register are in place to review, monitor and manage risks. Risk assessment documentation is reviewed by the LCCA Board at least every six months.

2.3 LCCA must disseminate its strategy systematically to all stakeholders to ensure consistency of awareness and understanding by all stakeholders.

Updated in July 2018, a clear and comprehensive strategic plan has been made available to all staff online, with hard copies available in the library. A useful executive summary of the strategy is on the LCCA website and features in the staff induction pack for all new employees. Staff demonstrate a sound awareness of the Institution's main strategic objectives and educational direction.

2.4 LCCA must ensure that it has effective procedures in place to monitor strategic targets to ensure their continued relevance and achievability.

Leaders make use of a monitoring plan which systematically considers each of the seven strategic objectives. The LCCA Board holds senior managers to account when reporting against each of the key objectives, for example partnerships, resources and academic affairs. The Board meets six times each year, with additional monitoring by the senior management team each month. Board meetings are appropriately recorded.

4.10 LCCA must develop its reporting structure to enable consistency in both in-year and year-on-year analysis and comparisons to help build the coherence of LCCA as a single institution.

Leaders and managers confirm that a clear, consistent and robust reporting structure is in place to analyse performance and effectiveness. Annual monitoring reports are completed at all levels, with a consistent

approach taken at programme level. Board meetings follow a consistent format which ensures the effective evaluation and comparison of recruitment, retention, achievement and progression data.

4.11 LCCA must ensure that the scope and coverage of action plans is clear and the time-lines more specific to support institutional monitoring.

Actions plans include clear lines of responsibility and reporting deadlines. Leaders and managers have taken the actions and recommendations made at the last inspection seriously and have taken a systematic approach to the monitoring and review of improvement actions plan. As a result, institutional monitoring is now highly effective.

8.13 LCCA must provide staff with the required resources to ensure that they do not use their personal online file sharing accounts.

A commercially available Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) has been procured for the sharing of course materials and resources and the communication of key messages. A short pilot has been completed relating to a small number of courses. An appropriate implementation plan is in place with wider access for students scheduled for October 2018 and full availability of resources for all courses from February 2019.

10.2 LCCA must clarify the requirements for staff to undertake research and or scholarly activity in their contracts.

A revised academic staff contract was introduced from November 2017 which clarifies the expectation and requirement for staff to undertake appropriate scholarly activity to support their role. Lecturers in the Business and Hospitality department have established a research nurture group which effectively promotes scholarly activity, disseminates academic research and supports staff to submit articles for publication. A number of staff have been successful in publishing academic contributions in peer reviewed journals, to further share best practice.

10.5 LCCA must identify dedicated time for staff to meet to share subject specific developments in order to ensure that staff are well supported in their professional development.

Staff benefit from access to a number of professional development activities both internally and externally. A staff development calendar identifies specific dedicated time for undertaking relevant development activities. LCCA hosts a number of industry speakers throughout the year, which provides useful opportunities for industrial updating and the development of industry knowledge and skills.

11.1 LCCA must ensure that all the premises are included on the website and prospectuses to ensure the provision is described accurately to potential students.

LCCA now operates from a single site which is accurately reflected in course literature and on the Institution's website. This ensures that students have accurate information on which to base their enrolment choices.

11.3 LCCA must tighten its procedures for updating information to ensure they maintain consistency and accuracy.

Managers have introduced a clear process and procedure for information review to ensure the accuracy and consistency of information provided to students and prospective students. Two bi-annual audits are completed by senior managers to review published information and ensure its accuracy. A clear protocol for the updating of information has been established, with a revised privacy policy now in operation.

13.5 LCCA must use consistent channels of communication with students out of class hours to ensure messages are not missed.

GUS, as the parent company, does not permit the use of individual LCCA student e-mail addresses. Key information can be communicated through the internal intranet system. All academic staff have a dedicated LCCA e-mail address from which to send urgent messages to students' individual e-mail accounts. When the VLE is fully operational, this will provide a further tool for communicating with individuals and groups of students.

15.5 LCCA must implement and monitor the effectiveness of the new personal tutor system and ensure that students are fully aware of it.

The academic and personal tutorial system is well established. Students benefit from two formal tutorials each semester, which are documented through personal tutor records. A tutorial handbook is available to clarify the process and the entitlement. Students also benefit from a student mentoring service which supports the tutorial process.

16.2 16.3 16.4 LCCA must identify more clearly the specific support available for international students across the range of relevant areas.

LCCA leaders and tutors confirm that all current students are either UK nationals, or European Union nationals who are already living and working in the UK. LCCA does not currently enrol international students who are new to the UK and who would require more specific support. A good range of general, and more specific, student handbooks offer appropriate advice and guidance on living and studying on London, careers and support arrangements.

25.2 LCCA must articulate a set of specific performance indicators to cover all the provision and enable year-on-year comparisons and analysis.

Leaders confirm that a range of performance indicators are regularly considered to analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of provision over time. Indicators include student satisfaction rates and achievement and progression data. Self-assessment and strategic summary reports are produced to support the performance analysis.

26.5 LCCA must engage systematically with the wider community to ensure that it has full benefit of the input of employers and industry.

LCCA regularly engages with a variety of industry employers through internship programmes and hosting employment events and guest speakers. Leaders confirm that industry employers would be fully involved during any course validation process. However, currently, there is no specific employer engagement strategy in place to actively benefit from the input of employers and industry, for example, when reviewing key strategic objective or to support curriculum planning and development.

27.6 LCCA must clearly document the lines of responsibility for the management and use of information and for ensuring it is used to improve the provision.

A systematic process is in place for the management of information, including the updating of information and checks on the accuracy of information provided internally and externally. A clear sign-off process is in place, controlled by managers and directors. Senior managers carry out additional information audits and checks bi-annually, which are fully recorded and monitored.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

LCCA should consider whether the membership of the LCCA Board provides the Institution with sufficient objectivity.

Board membership review is not currently taking place. LCCA leaders feel there is sufficient objectivity on the LCCA Board. The holding company, GUS, continues to Chair the Board and provides appropriate support and challenge.

The Institution is recommended to review job descriptions to ensure they appropriately reflect the qualifications and experience that is required for the job role.

Job descriptions feature the necessary qualifications and experience required for the various job roles.

It is recommended that LCCA ensures that all documentation is consistently version controlled, irrespective of whether it is produced by LCCA or GUS.

Documents scrutinised have a clear version management system in place, with regular review taking place.

The Institution should ensure that the new appraisal system is effectively rolled out as quickly as possible so that all staff's performance has been properly reviewed.

Managers confirm that the large majority of staff have now undertaken an appropriate appraisal. In meetings with academic staff, the appraisal system is clearly understood. Examples of recent appraisal paperwork support the effective implementation of the new system.

It is recommended that LCCA ensures that the views of stakeholders are systematically canvassed so that they can inform curriculum developments.

This recommendation is in progress and will be fully reviewed at the next inspection.

LCCA is encouraged to maximise the benefits of in-house staff development events by improving attendance.

This recommendation is in progress and will be fully reviewed at the next inspection.

LCCA is recommended to develop the use of the online platform so that its potential is better realised as a support for students in all aspects of their studies including communication.

This recommendation is in progress and will be fully reviewed at the next inspection.

In order to establish and maintain probity and ensure the teaching relationship is not compromised, LCCA should find an alternative to using students' personal e-mails for communicating with them out of hours.

LCCA follows the clear policy maintained by GUS, as the holding company, which does not permit the issuing of LCCA e-mail addresses to students. Clear protocols for communicating with students, using personal e-mail addresses, are in place. All LCCA staff have an institution e-mail address to communicate with students.

LCCA is encouraged to increase the course specific element of induction to better meet student expectations.

This recommendation is in progress and will be fully reviewed at the next inspection.

The Institution should develop systems to ensure that all staff and students are fully aware of information and changes in policies and systems.

This recommendation is in progress and will be fully reviewed at the next inspection.

LCCA is encouraged to develop a single format for annual course reviews to support consistency and develop a sense of institutional coherence.

Leaders confirm that a consistent format for academic monitoring and review is in place and fully implemented.

LCCA should consider dedicating a space for associate tutors to meet.

Additional office accommodation is now available on the fifth floor of the premises and provides appropriate workspace for associate tutors, alongside permanent academic staff.

PART C – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

FURTHER WORK TO MEET OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Priority H/M/L

8.13 The VLE development must be completed and fully implemented to provide all students with appropriate access to relevant online course resources.	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
26.5 Further initiatives must be developed to fully engage with, and benefit from, the input of employers and industry.	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

FURTHER WORK TO MEET OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Progress in relation to following recommendations will be fully reviewed at the next inspection:

It is recommended that LCCA ensures that the views of stakeholders are systematically canvassed so that they can inform curriculum developments.

LCCA is encouraged to maximise the benefits of in-house staff development events by improving attendance.

LCCA is recommended to develop the use of the online platform so that its potential is better realised as a support for students in all aspects of their studies including communication.

LCCA is encouraged to increase the course specific element of induction to better meet student expectations.

The Institution should develop systems to ensure that all staff and students are fully aware of information and changes in policies and systems.