

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Ashburton Chefs Academy

ADDRESS: Old Exeter Road
Ashburton
Devon
TQ13 7LG

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Ms Stella West-Harling

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 16 January 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 28 March 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

The Ashburton Chefs Academy (the Academy/the Provider) was launched in 2012. The Ashburton Group Limited is the holding company of both the Ashburton Cookery School, which was established in 1992, and the Ashburton Chefs Academy. The Ashburton Cookery School delivers short residential cookery courses to home cooks and the Chefs Academy focuses on vocational study and delivers accredited qualifications to aspiring chefs. The Chefs Academy became a not-for-profit limited company in 2016. Whilst both businesses share the same management teams and resources, the businesses are run independently of each other. BAC accreditation relates to the Ashburton Chefs Academy only.

The founder of the Chefs Academy, who is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), attends monthly board meetings. She delegates the day-to-day responsibilities to the Managing Director, the Finance Director, the Chef Director and the Operations Manager.

The aim of the Chefs Academy is to provide world-class training in the culinary arts serving those students who are looking for an alternative route to success from that offered in state-funded catering colleges.

Ashburton Chefs Academy is based in a purpose-built premises in the village of Ashburton on the edge of Dartmoor National Park in Devon. There are also two student accommodation blocks, which are located close to the Academy.

Since the last inspection, there have been some staff changes, including the recruitment of a new Customer Service Manager, who will start work at the beginning of February 2019.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Academy offers a variety of culinary cooking courses, that have all been developed in-house and are delivered face-to-face. The courses incorporate qualifications that are regulated by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation in order to create a training programme that leads to one or more industry recognised qualifications.

The Certificate in Culinary Arts, which was previously called the Certificate in Professional Cookery, is a four-week chef foundation programme. It incorporates a Level 2 Award in Culinary Skills and is accredited by the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH). It also includes a Level 2 Award in Food Safety, accredited by Highfield Awarding Body for Compliance (HABC). The Provider also offers a Level 3 Diploma in Patisserie, which was previously called the Diploma in Professional Patisserie. This is a 15-week course, reduced from 22 weeks. This course is accredited by Innovate Awarding. It also includes an HABC accredited Level 2 Award in Food Safety.

The Academy also offers a Level 4 Diploma in Culinary Arts, previously called the Professional Culinary Diploma. This is a 17-week course, reduced from 22 weeks and is accredited by CTH. It also includes an HABC accredited Level 3 Award in Food Safety and a Wine and Spirit Education Trust (WSET) Level 1 Certificate in Wines. In addition, an Advanced Diploma in Cuisine and Patisserie is also offered. This is a 32-week course that consists of a combination of the Level 3 Diploma in Patisserie and the Level 4 Diploma in Culinary Arts. This course includes the option of a three-month work placement in a commercial restaurant kitchen.

There are plans in place to launch an additional non-accredited module called the Yacht Chef Certificate, for which there is already a small number of future bookings.

The participants also take part in a variety of enrichment opportunities including visits to local farms and a fish market. Specialist tutors also offer lessons in subjects such as cured and smoked food, foraging, allergy cooking and chocolate masterclasses.

At the time of the inspection, 39 participants were studying at the Academy. All were over the age of 18. The majority of the participants were female and from the United Kingdom (UK). Other countries represented were the United States of America, Canada, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Greece, Antigua, Switzerland, Ireland, Trinidad, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Australia.

Entry requirements include evidence of academic achievement in English and mathematics. The chef foundation programme does not have any formal entry requirements as it is a practical course and is designed to be open access. The programmes at levels 3 and 4 also include a recruitment interview to assess prospective participants' professional and educational backgrounds, their English language level and motivation. There are set start times for each course.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one day. Meetings took place with three directors, the academy administrator, a group of participants and a group of chef tutors. Three lesson observations were carried out and various documentation, electronic databases and the premises were reviewed. The Provider was very well prepared for the inspection and the level of co-operation throughout the inspection was very good.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	14-15 January 2013
Interim	4 March 2014
Re-accreditation	7-8 November 2016

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

Due to a change in the accrediting bodies' guided learning hours, the Diploma in Culinary Arts and the Diploma in Patisserie courses have reduced in length from 22 weeks to 17 weeks and 15 weeks respectively. The course names have also changed slightly.

From September 2018, the Provider has offered an Advanced Diploma in Cuisine and Patisserie Course. This is a combination of the Diploma in Patisserie and the Diploma in Culinary Arts courses. The benefit to students of taking this combined course is the discounted price and the option of undertaking a three-month work placement in a commercial restaurant kitchen to further their experience.

The previous Pastry Chef Tutor left the business in April 2018 and a new tutor was recruited to take over this post. The Chefs Academy Manager left the business in January 2019 and most of her responsibilities have been taken over by the academy administrator. A new Customer Service Manager has been recruited and will start work at the beginning of February 2019.

A new programme has been launched. This is an additional non-accredited specialised module for participants wishing to become chefs on yachts.

2. Response to actions points in last report

6.1 The Provider must amend the student code of conduct, within the course handbook, to include reference to the Academy's expectations regarding attendance and punctuality.

The code of conduct has been amended to include appropriate references to the Provider's expectations regarding attendance and punctuality. Participants receive the document on enrolment and sign to confirm they have read it as part of their induction.

24.4 The Provider must ensure that visitors sign in on arrival and provide them with a briefing regarding fire safety.

Visitors sign in on arrival and are provided with a visitors' permit, on a lanyard, which includes relevant written fire safety information.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider should make amendments to the student code of conduct, within the course handbook, to include specific reference to the consequences of participants' unacceptable behaviour.

The participant code of conduct makes it clear that unacceptable behaviour is likely to result in a disciplinary action. The code also sets out the disciplinary procedure so that participants are clear about the consequences.

Effective arrangements should be made to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Effective arrangements are in place to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation. These include a suitable policy wording, a detailed risk assessment, appropriate staff online training and a detailed guidance document for the staff.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The Chefs Academy is well managed. The senior managers work very well together to achieve the Academy's aims and objectives, which are clearly set out in a relevant and detailed five-year plan. The plan includes an analysis of the size and needs of the market to ensure that the provision continues to meet the needs of its target market. The plans for future programme development also take good account of participants' feedback to ensure that the programmes are relevant to the market's needs going forward.

There is very good communication between the managers and the staff to ensure that everyone is aware of the priorities. All staff are effectively involved in the decision making. Communication takes place through a range of appropriate methods including monthly board meetings involving all the directors, regular recorded meetings of the chef tutors and daily catch-up meetings to discuss the plans and issues that may arise on that day. There is also regular informal communication through which staff at all levels can feed back their views and any issues to the managers.

The administration of the Provider is effectively managed. The administrative procedures are very well documented using a tracking sheet to ensure that the organisation and delivery of the courses run smoothly. The participants confirmed that the administration support they received prior to arrival was very good and that they received prompt answers to their questions.

There is an effective system for reviewing the performance of staff, which focuses on those who have direct day-to-day contact with the participants. The system includes a review of the staff's major strengths and development needs, future performance targets and any training and development required. Not all the targets set are sufficiently measurable to ensure they are met and a minority of appraisal records do not include development plans.

The Provider has effective systems to monitor its own performance. Detailed participant feedback is obtained, analysed and reviewed and appropriate action taken as a result. The Provider's success is also monitored through tracking the qualification outcomes of the participants and their destinations once they have left the Academy. The performance data is not maintained in a way that enables a year-on-year analysis to be carried out to identify trends and to facilitate the setting of future improvement targets.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The courses are well managed and planned. There are clear schedules which set out what is to be covered each day in the kitchens. The courses are full-time with a high level of practical training and intensive study mirroring the expectations of the workplace and the demands of potential employers. The participants are advised about this intensive approach so that they know what to expect. As a result of this approach, graduates can expect to obtain good chef positions in the industry.

The courses are delivered in ways that enable the participants to develop the knowledge and skills that they will need in the workplace and in any final assessments. The chef tutors give clear demonstrations of the techniques they are covering in the session. They use current examples, such as techniques that have been used in recent television cookery programmes, as well as appropriate humour to engage the participants. Food safety and hygiene tips are covered as an integral part of the lessons. When the participants are practicing the techniques, the tutors provide excellent support and feedback. In theory

classes, good questioning and interaction with the participants are used effectively to support the participants' learning. As a result, the participants make good progress. The participants confirmed that they were enjoying the teaching and learning new knowledge and skills.

The tutors have good written information about the profile of the participants and any additional learning needs, disabilities and allergies at the start of the course. These are discussed at daily meetings and with the participants so that appropriate support and adjustments can be made

The progress of the participants is effectively monitored. Their assessment results and attendance levels are reviewed as part of the monitoring process. If a participant fails an assessment, the reasons are analysed and discussed in a follow-up meeting. In addition, a weekly report is made on all the students, which highlights any areas of concern so that all the tutors are aware. Appropriate additional support, such as tutorials, is offered to participants who are struggling.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The participants know who to go to if they have any personal problems. On arrival, they are provided with information about the welfare support that is available and who they should approach with any concerns. There is an open-door policy which encourages participants to raise any issues quickly to get them resolved.

The participants receive appropriate information before they arrive at the academy, including about the course and the available facilities. They can request any additional information. As a result, they are well aware of the expectations placed on them by attendance on their course. On arrival, they receive a course handbook, which provides relevant additional information and policies such as those relating to assessment, appeals, complaints and disciplinary procedures and attendance.

Participants receive a thorough induction which enables them to get to know the staff and the other participants well. As a result, they are able to settle quickly into their studies and feel comfortable at the academy.

Appropriate information is made available to international participants before they arrive and on arrival and any additional requests for information are dealt with effectively. There is no information, for example, relating to the climate and culture in the UK, which is readily accessible to international students before they arrive to enhance their knowledge. The international participants confirmed that they had received the necessary information to meet their needs.

The information provided at the start of the course, regarding the participants' profiles, includes religious beliefs so that they can be appropriately supported. There is a fair and clear complaints procedure with appropriate timescales.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The premises are well decorated and maintained. The level of cleanliness is high. There is a pleasant reception and seating area for visitors.

The kitchen training areas are suitably sized for the current number of students in each class. They are well equipped. There is an area, for each kitchen, where participants can relax. Good guidance on health and safety is provided for the participants, including a full briefing as part of the induction and additional information provided in the course handbook.

There is planning permission in place to build a bigger building on the current site to enable the academy and cookery school to grow.

The participants say they are very pleased with the quality of the premises and facilities and the teaching staff confirmed that they had access to good equipment and that the facilities were of an excellent quality.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

A very effective management team, which works well collaboratively for the benefit of the participants.

Good quality teaching and support for the students, which enable the participants to succeed on their courses and move on to good jobs in the catering sector.

A very attractive location in rural Devon and excellent premises which provide a very good learning and working environment.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High

Medium

Low

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

The Provider should ensure that appraisal records for all the staff, including all administrative staff, include measurable performance goals and completed development plans.

The Provider is recommended to maintain its performance data so that it can be used to identify year-on-year trends and set future improvement targets.

The Provider is recommended to develop specific information, for example, on the climate and culture in the UK, and make it accessible to international students before they arrive.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE