

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

Short Course Provider (SCP) Re-accreditation Inspection

NAME OF PROVIDER: Spirit Studios

ADDRESS: 65-69 Downing Street
Manchester
M1 7JE

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr Ian Hu

DATE OF INSPECTION: 5 & 11 December 2018

ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION: Accredited

DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:

- Re-accreditation awarded for the full four-year period
- Probation accreditation
- Decision on accreditation deferred
- Award of accreditation to be withdrawn

DATE: 28 March 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Spirit Studios (the Provider) was established in 1980 as a commercial sound studio. In 1984, Spirit Studios changed its name to the School of Sound Recording (SSR) and provided courses in audio engineering and music production. In November 2018, the decision was made to return to the original name of Spirit Studios, due to the legacy reputation and high regard for the brand in the United Kingdom (UK) and overseas.

The Provider aims to equip graduates with the skills, experience, contacts and opportunities to find their dream jobs in the music and related industries.

Spirit Studios is a private limited company. The main campus is located in central Manchester, in dedicated premises that have been converted for the purpose of teaching its programmes. There is also a second premises in north London, which opened in January 2011. It is located on the lower ground floor of a building known as the Rotunda. The complex houses a number of other businesses over five floors.

The founding Director of Spirit Studios is now the Managing Director. He delegates the overall management of the business to the Director, who is based in Manchester. The London operation is managed, day-to-day, by the Head of London Operations. Central support, for example, with regard to human resources, is provided to the London campus from Manchester.

Spirit Studios has links with industry partners who produce music and sound equipment such as AVID, Steinberg, Apple and Advanced Music Systems (AMS) Neve Limited. The Provider procures equipment and resources from these providers to ensure that participants are developing applied skills using software and hardware currently used in industry.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Spirit Studios offers a range of full-time accredited academic courses, alongside part-time professional industry courses and one-to-one tuition. Full-time programmes are provided in collaboration with a number of university partners, offering a variety of degree level courses at Levels 4 to 6. BAC accreditation relates only to the part-time professional industry course provision, which offer three main subject areas. These are music production and sound engineering, electronic music production and music business and creative industries.

The professional industry courses are structured into specific modules. Each module is offered over a six-month period. Enrolment for the industry courses takes place twice each calendar year, with new courses commencing each September and March at both the London and Manchester campuses.

At the time of the inspection, there were 62 participants enrolled on part-time industry courses. The Provider accepts participants aged 16 and above although this is a rare occurrence given that the vast majority of participants are in employment in the industry. At the time of inspection, all participants were over the age of 18. The majority of participants are male and from the UK. A small minority of students are from other countries including Lithuania, Italy and Spain.

No formal entry requirements are required for industry courses, although competency in information technology and communication skills are highly recommended.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over two days. One day was spent at the London campus and a second day at the main Manchester campus. Meetings took place with the Director, the Academic and Technical Directors, the Operations Manager, trainers, administrators and participants. A tour of both

premises was carried out and a range of training sessions was observed. Various documentation was scrutinised along with the centre websites for both the Manchester and London campuses. The availability of the information provided to the inspector was good and the organisation co-operated well with the inspector throughout the inspection.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	25-26 May 2010
Interim	31 January 2012
Supplementary	10 November 2014
Re-accreditation	11-12 November 2014
Interim	22 August 2016
Spot Check	12 April 2017

PART B - JUDGMENT AND EVIDENCE

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

INSPECTION AREA - MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

1. The provider is effectively managed

1.1	The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, trustees or governing body.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
1.2	The head of the provider and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
1.3	There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff and those working at the delivery venue/s.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider has a clearly defined and appropriate management structure that is fully documented in the organisation charts for both the London and Manchester campuses.

The Managing Director delegates operational oversight to the Director, the Academic and Technical Directors and the Operations Manager, who are effectively supported by a range of senior managers. Senior leaders and managers are appropriately qualified and experienced and have the confidence of staff and students. All have a sound understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities and are effective in discharging their duties in order to provide a high-quality experience for participants.

Effective channels of communication operate between managers and staff at both the London and Manchester campuses. Regular meetings are conducted and recorded where appropriate, with actions noted and monitored where appropriate. This ensures that all staff are up-to-date on key changes, developments and priorities.

2. The administration of the provider is effective

2.1	Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.2	The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the provider.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.3	The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.4	Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the provider.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.5	Data collection and collation systems are effective.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The size of the administrative team is appropriate to meet the needs of students and staff and to meet daily operational demands. Administrators are suitably qualified to undertake their role and have a sound understanding of their responsibilities. Support roles are clearly defined in the organisational structure, including a senior administrator who has specific responsibility for the administration requirements relating to participants on part-time professional industry programmes.

Policies, procedures and systems are appropriately documented and disseminated, ensuring that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of key administrative processes. At the time of inspection, a number of policies were being updated to reflect the recent change in name from SSR to Spirit Studios.

A range of data collection and collation systems are effective, for example, to manage admission registers, attendance rates and assessment outcomes. These systems are supported effectively by the electronic learner management system.

3. The provider employs appropriate managerial and administrative staff

3.1 There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff. Yes No

3.2 Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment. Yes No

3.3 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff. Yes No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider effectively implements relevant policies and procedures to ensure that sufficient numbers of suitably qualified and experience staff are employed. Tutors have very relevant industrial and vocational backgrounds which enhance the participant experience and ensure that teaching and learning are relevant, current and highly effective. Many tutors on industry courses are still actively involved in the music production and sound engineering industry, ensuring they maintain their professional credibility and professional skills to a high standard.

Effective systems are in place to review staff performance through a suitable appraisal system. Managers review performance indicators, such as lesson observation feedback and participant feedback, and set appropriate targets for development. As a result, review measures are effective in ensuring participants receive a high standard of education and make good progress towards their educational goals.

4. Publicity material, both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the provider and its programmes

4.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the provider's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered. Yes No

4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. Yes No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Provider and course publicity materials are authentic and relevant and ensure that prospective participants are able to make informed decisions about their course choices. At the time of the inspection, the directors had taken the very recent decision to re-brand to its former name, Spirit Studios, launching a new website for the Manchester campus to reflect the change.

Re-branding of the London campus is scheduled to take place in the new calendar year, along with a phased re-branding of existing materials and printed media. There are clear plans in place to ensure that the rebranding process is appropriately managed and implemented over time.

5. The provider takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable participants for its courses

5.1	Entry requirements for each course, including those relating to language ability, are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective participants.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
5.2	A formal application process ensures that participants meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
5.3	The provider replies to all application enquiries promptly and appropriately and briefs all stakeholders properly on the nature and requirements of its programmes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
5.4	Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Effective arrangements are implemented to ensure that participants are enrolled onto suitable courses that meet their needs, learning goals and aptitudes. Course materials include clear information on minimum entry requirements, where applicable. All participants take part in a pre-enrolment interview with an experienced and knowledgeable course advisor, or course leader, to ensure that recruitment questions are suitably addressed, and participants are signposted to the most suitable course options to meet their needs.

Participants confirm that their application enquiries were dealt with very promptly and efficiently and the information, guidance and advice was appropriate and useful. Inspection findings confirm this view. Interviews via telephone, or online video conference, are often used by course advisors to meet the needs of international students. There is a clear and effective application process to ensure that entry requirements are met, where applicable.

The Provider does not currently make use of recruitment agents.

6. There is an appropriate policy on participant attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it

6.1	There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on participant attendance and punctuality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6.2	Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all participants, collated centrally and reviewed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
6.3	Participant absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider implements a clear and appropriate policy on participant attendance and punctuality which is effectively communicated and shared. Participants confirm that there are clear expectations for regular attendance and that they are aware of the importance of good attendance levels in order to meet the summative assessment demands of each industry course. Trainers take class registers in each session and attendance is recorded on the learner management system.

Attendance records are systematically maintained and recorded, which provides a useful and effective record of participation. Records can be accessed by trainers, managers and participants to monitor and review individual, and course level, attendance rates.

There are clear procedures in place for addressing non-attendance and low attendance levels with individual participants. Attendance which falls below 70 per cent must be accompanied by a doctor's note. The policy includes a clear definition of authorised absence. However, in a very small minority of cases, administrators do not always follow-

up promptly when dealing with industry course participants who have a number of unauthorised consecutive absences.

7. The provider regularly obtains and records feedback from participants and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary

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|-----|---|---|---|
| 7.1 | The provider has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from participants and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner providers and employers) on all aspects of the provider's provision, including formal participant representation where appropriate. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7.2 | Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7.3 | The feedback is reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7.4 | There is a mechanism for reporting on the provider's response to the feedback to the participant body. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider has effective mechanisms for obtaining the views of participants and responding appropriately where necessary. Regular online surveys are used effectively to gather the views of participants on a range of relevant performance indicators, such as quality of facilities, tutor support and access to recording spaces.

Managers regularly review the survey outcomes and communicate their response effectively, usually through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). All participants have access to, and regularly engage with the VLE. When questioned, participants felt that the Provider took their views seriously and made appropriate adjustments and enhancements where possible, for example, improvements to software and hardware to support their technical skills.

8. The provider has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement

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|-----|--|---|--|
| 8.1 | There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the provider's performance. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8.2 | Reports are compiled which present the results of the provider's reviews and incorporate action plans. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8.3 | Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider has a range of systems in place to periodically review performance and identify areas for improvement. For example, an annual lesson observation report provides an overview analysis of the outcomes of teaching, learning and assessment evaluations, identifying key areas of strength and a summary of areas for improvement.

8.2 Due to changes in staffing, senior leaders acknowledge that the formal annual institutional review has not taken place in 2018 and therefore an overall review and evaluation of the Provider's performance has not been formally carried out and no summary report compiled.

8.3 No formal quality improvement action plan has been implemented to systematically monitor and review key priorities for development. Leaders agree that this process should be reinstated at the earliest opportunity.

INSPECTION AREA – TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

9. Programme management is effective

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|-----|---|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 9.1 | There is a suitably qualified and experienced programme manager or management team with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment and the management of the body of trainers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 9.2 | Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 9.3 | The allocation of trainers to classes provides for a consistent learning experience and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 9.4 | There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures for the acquisition of academic resources. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Since the previous inspection, responsibility for the management of teaching, learning and assessment across the Provider has been further devolved to the now part-time Academic Director and the full-time Tutor Manager. Managers are suitably experienced and qualified to provide effective oversight of learning programmes.

A programme of lesson observations is effective in monitoring the quality of delivery and the participant experience.

Allocations of trainers and rooms is effective to ensure participants receive a high-quality learning experience in a suitable and well-appointed learning environment.

There is a suitable procedure in place for the acquisition of suitable learning resources to support all industry courses.

10. The courses are planned and delivered in ways that enable participants to succeed

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|------|---|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 10.1 | Courses are designed and delivered in ways that allow participants to develop the knowledge and skills which will be required for final examinations or assessments or which meet stakeholders' requirements. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 10.2 | Lessons and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 10.3 | Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 10.4 | Participants are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 10.5 | The academic backgrounds and particular needs of participants are taken into account in the classroom delivery of the course. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The professional industry courses are well planned and delivered and include clear summative assessment requirements, which are effectively shared with all participants.

Formative assessment arrangements are effective and prepare participants well for the end of module summative assessments. As a result, almost all participants make very good progress in developing their practical skills and underpinning theoretical knowledge. Almost all participants who complete the industry courses they started on are successful in achieving the course aims.

Frequent internal moderation of results is conducted at the Manchester campus, with clear records of outcomes. However, there has been no internal moderation of industry course assessments at the London campus this academic year. Leaders and managers agree that stronger internal moderation monitoring procedures at the London site are

required and it would be beneficial to reinstate the cross-centre moderation process, which has been previously carried out.

Trainers skillfully encourage learners to develop their levels of independence and autonomy throughout their learning journey. Learners are provided with excellent opportunities to apply their underpinning knowledge and understanding in industry standard studios, mixing and editing suites and disk-jockey booths.

Participants' specific needs and backgrounds are appropriately considered by trainers and managers and are reflected in the course delivery and assessments. For example, tutors tailor the examples and case studies used in lessons to the personal interests of participants.

11. Trainers are suitable for the courses to which they are allocated and effective in delivering them

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|------|--|---|---|
| 11.1 | Trainers are appropriately qualified and experienced. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 11.2 | Trainers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skill which allows them to deliver the content of courses effectively. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 11.3 | The appraisal procedures for trainers incorporate regular classroom observation. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 11.4 | Trainers are supported in their continuing professional development and enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the learning of participants. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 11.5 | Trainers respond to different learning needs of participants where appropriate, taking various learning styles into account in their planning and delivery of lessons. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 11.6 | Trainers employ effective strategies to involve all participants in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Trainers are industry professional and vocational specialists in their related professional fields and disciplines. Most continue to actively work in the music and sound industry, as studio owners, managers, engineers and technicians, ensuring their vocational and technical skills are current and relevant. They use their significant knowledge, skills and experience to challenge participants to apply their developing skills in a range of realistic case studies and scenarios. Their wider industrial roles, professional updating, links with local employers and partners, and the programme of guest speakers, all ensure that trainers remain highly skilled and deliver a high-quality learning experience to participants.

The standard of teaching, learning and assessment is regularly observed and evaluated by managers. Trainers receive detailed, graded feedback which acknowledges areas of particular strength and areas for further development. As a result, these measures are effective in ensuring participants receive a high standard of education and make good progress towards their educational goals.

Trainers use creative resources and high-quality facilities well to promote applied learning, group work and collaboration. Trainers make effective use of probing and differentiated questioning to check learning and encourage participants to consider how their new skills and knowledge could be applied in a range of different industrial settings. As a result, trainers ensure that their lessons appeal to the wide range of future progression goals and aspirations of the participants.

12. The provider provides participants and trainers with access to appropriate resources and materials for study

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Access to learning resources is excellent. Participants benefit from industry-leading facilities and equipment which develop their practical and technical skills. In interviews, participants rated very highly the access they have, outside the classroom setting, to outstanding music and sound facilities, many of which have been recently refurbished and updated. As a result, participants make substantial and sustained progress, as they are able to practise techniques and approaches demonstrated in class, on a range of live client briefs, and formative assessment tasks, including personal projects where appropriate.

A small selection of printed texts is available at both campuses, to support participants' studies. These are supplemented by additional learning resources on the VLE, including articles, reports and audio-visual media. The VLE is frequently used and valued by participants, particularly when they have been unable to make an evening class or to consolidate their understanding after a training session.

13. Participants receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, which are effectively monitored

13.1	Feedback is given to individual participants tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
13.2	Courses are planned to include a schedule of assessments, the procedures and criteria for which are available in writing and in advance to participants and trainers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
13.3	Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of participants who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
13.4	Participants are made aware of how their progress relates to their targeted level of achievement.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
13.5	Additional support or advice on alternative courses is provided to participants who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA
13.6	Participants have appropriate access to trainers outside class time.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Participants have a clear understanding of the summative assessment procedures and criteria which apply to each of the industry course modules. When questioned, all participants felt they were well prepared to undertake summative assessments, supported by friendly and accessible trainers and regular practice assessments and knowledge checks. For example, trainers set mock assessment activities and spot checks on key knowledge topics to ensure participants are developing the skills necessary to achieve their summative assessments.

Participants receive detailed written feedback which is specific to the outcomes of their summative assessment performance. Progress and achievement tracking is very specific, accurate and detailed. Comprehensive verbal feedback is also provided, through one-to-one consultations with trainers. Feedback is effective in helping participants to understand how to improve their practical skills further.

Managers, trainers and participants confirm that those participants who are not making expected progress are supported effectively on a one-to-one basis. However, there is no formal process for carrying out a documented progress review and to record more serious concerns where progress is below expectations. Managers and trainers agree this would be useful in order to provide a clear audit trail of any academic concerns and to support participants with clear, specific and measurable targets to inform their improvement.

Currently, re-takes and re-submissions are not permitted for participants on professional industry courses who fail a summative assessment. A compensation model is adopted, where a failed component can be off-set by a higher-level of performance in another assessment component. When questioned, not all participants, or trainers, were clear on the re-submission and re-take policy, although it is clearly stated in the written assessment policy and participant

handbooks. Leaders acknowledge that the current policy is an area due for review at the next periodic course review, due for 2019.

14. The provider offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies wherever appropriate

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

15. There is a clear rationale for courses leading to unaccredited or internal awards (this does not apply to the provision of certificates of attendance only)

15.1 There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the RQF and evidence that participants who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level. Yes No NA

15.2 There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study. Yes No NA

15.3 External moderators are involved in the assessment process where appropriate. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

The Provider no longer uses an external awarding organisation to accredit professional industry courses. All industry courses are now awarded internally.

15.1 As a result, there is no longer a clear statement of notional level claimed for industry courses, against the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

The internal awards are very well respected in the industry. Leaders claim that achieving an internally awarded certificate from the Provider is a significant differentiator and advantage for those looking to enter the music and sound industry at a professional level. This view is supported by trainers and participants, with many participants progressing to industry related employment. The Provider has a long and successful track record of preparing participants well to enter the sector. As only unaccredited internal awards are offered to industry course participants, the Provider does not use external moderators in the assessment process.

16. There are satisfactory procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment

16.1 The provider complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration. Yes No NA

16.2 For internal assessments and awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration, and clear procedures for participants to appeal against their marks. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

There are clear and robust systems in place for the conduct of summative assessments. Participants have access to a clear and appropriate appeals policy and procedure, if required.

INSPECTION AREA - PARTICIPANT WELFARE

17. Participants receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances

17.1	There is at least one named staff member responsible for participant welfare who is suitably trained, accessible to all participants and available to provide advice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
17.2	Participants receive appropriate advice before the start of the programme.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
17.3	Participants receive an appropriate induction and relevant information at the start of the programme.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
17.4	Participants are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
17.5	The provider has policies in place to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
17.6	Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place and are regularly reviewed to keep all participants safe.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> NA
17.7	Effective arrangements are in place to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

A suitably trained Welfare Officer is available to provide support and guidance to all participants on part-time industry courses. All participants receive a suitable course induction before formal classes commence. Currently, the Welfare Officer does not routinely attend the induction of industry course participants. Consequently, not all participants are fully aware of the welfare support services available to them.

Participants benefit from access to a range of useful support guides, handbooks and policies, many of which are shared through the website and VLE. Policies include those relating to conduct, preventing discrimination and dealing with any abusive behaviour.

The Provider does accept participants aged 16 to 17 on industry courses but this is very much by exception. There were no participants aged under 18 at the time of inspection. Those under 18 attending the London campus are required to have an adult chaperone at all times when on site. No chaperone is required at the Manchester campus. There is a suitable safeguarding policy in place which identifies the Director as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL has been appropriately trained at the multi-agency level, along with a suitable deputy DSL. All relevant staff have completed an enhanced disclosure and barring service (DBS) check.

17.6 Safeguarding arrangements are not fully effective. Not all staff have received basic safeguarding awareness training and senior leaders acknowledge that this is an urgent area for improvement. Developed plans are in place to provide multi-media training to the whole workforce in a flexible format to ensure freelance staff, and those only training occasionally, can access this essential guidance. Managers also acknowledge that there is no easily accessible safeguarding guidance for participants, for example, clear contact details of relevant staff to whom participants should reach out with any safeguarding concerns. There is no single central record of pre-appointment checks in place to provide a clear summary record of the required background checks and dates.

Effective arrangements are in place to protect participants from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Managers and trainers have a good awareness regarding the level of risk in the organisation. There is a suitable policy wording and further appropriate guidance is included in the student handbooks. The staff have been appropriately trained.

18. International participants are provided with specific advice and assistance

- | | | | |
|------|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 18.1 | International participants receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and staying in the UK. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 18.2 | International participants receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 18.3 | Information and advice specific to international participants continues to be available throughout the course of study. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 18.4 | Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA**Comments**

Only a very small minority of participants are from international destinations. Initial information and guidance are provided over the internet, using online conferencing software, to ensure that international participants receive the advice needed to make an informed choice about their studies.

On arrival, welfare staff and trainers provide additional guidance on living in Manchester or London.

A specific international student guide is provided to participants before arrival in the UK. The guide provides helpful guidance for those new to the local area and provides information on travel, nightlife, food, emergencies, healthcare, employment, banking and general advice.

Managers and trainers are aware of cultural needs and sensitivities. A dedicated prayer room is no longer available due to demands on space although all efforts are made to find appropriate space if required.

19. The fair treatment of participants is ensured

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|------|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 19.1 | Participants apply for and are enrolled on courses under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 19.2 | Participants have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 19.3 | Participants are advised of BAC's own complaints procedure. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met**Comments**

A fair and transparent application process is well implemented for all participants. For the large majority of participants who apply online, the terms and conditions are clearly presented. For the very few participants who enrol in person, there is no obvious written refund policy made available.

There is a clearly documented complaints policy, which is published in the staff and participant handbooks and made available online. The policy includes reference to the BAC procedure. Participants confirm that they are treated fairly and with respect and inspection findings confirm this view.

20. Where residential accommodation is offered, it is fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised

- | | | | |
|------|--|------------------------------|---|
| 20.1 | Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to the needs of participants. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 20.2 | Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted where participants under 18 are accommodated. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 20.3 | Clear rules and fire, health and safety procedures are in place, with appropriate precautions taken for security of participants and their property. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

- | | | | |
|------|--|------------------------------|---|
| 20.4 | A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of participants. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 20.5 | Separate accommodation blocks are provided for participants under 18. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

21. Where home-stay accommodation is organised, the welfare of participants is ensured and the provider's relationship with hosts is properly managed

- | | | | |
|------|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 21.1 | Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation which both provides a safe and comfortable living environment for participants and is appropriately located for travel to the provider and back. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 21.2 | Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before participants are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the provider. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 21.3 | The provider has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 21.4 | Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and participants before and during the placement. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 21.5 | Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for participant feedback and prompt action taken in the event of problems. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

22. The provider provides an appropriate social programme for participants and information on leisure activities in the area

- | | | | |
|------|--|---|--|
| 22.1 | Participants are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation at events and other leisure activities which may be of interest. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 22.2 | The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of participants. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 22.3 | Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability by the majority of participants. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 22.4 | Any activities organised by the provider are supervised by a responsible representative with suitable qualifications and experience. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

Participants benefit from an engaging programme of social events and activities that meet their interests and educational objectives. For example, participants in London can access local events at prestigious live music venues, often in collaboration with students on the Provider's academic courses.

Participants in Manchester have access to Student Sessions. This is a programme of industry events to encourage more people to get into the live music and events industry, and a programme of experienced guest lectures. Local live events and work experience opportunities are promoted through social media groups, along with an alumni project and regular competitions.

A scheme called The Creative Spirit encourages participants to explore a range of enrichment activities to broaden their skills and experiences, for example, specific recording techniques and support workshops from Studio Assistants. At the time of the inspection, a new radio station studio had just been completed, with participants invited to participate and broadcast online radio using the latest industry standard facilities.

INSPECTION AREA – PREMISES AND FACILITIES

23. The provider has secure possession of and access to its premises

23.1 The provider has secure tenure on its premises. Yes No NA

23.2 Where required, the provider has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Manchester premises are owned by the Provider. The London premises are leased with a contract until 2020.

The Directors are actively exploring alternative premises in London with plans to move premises when the current lease expires.

24. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for participants and staff

24.1 Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured. Yes No

24.2 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness. Yes No

24.3 There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories), made readily available to participants, staff and visitors. Yes No NA

24.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to participants, staff and visitors. Yes No

24.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information. Yes No

24.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of participants and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors. Yes No

24.7 There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness. Yes No

24.8 There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms. Yes No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Access to both the London and Manchester premises is secure. Both premises are maintained well and in a good standard of decoration, repair and cleanliness.

Appropriate guidance on health and safety is provided to ensure both premises are safe and secure for staff, participants and visitors.

Appropriate clean washrooms are available to meet demand. All areas are sufficiently ventilated and heated.

25. Training rooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered

- | | | | |
|------|--|---|---|
| 25.1 | Training rooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 25.2 | Training rooms and/or any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each course. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 25.3 | There are facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required on each course. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Training rooms, studios and production suites are sufficient in number and size for the number of participants on industry courses. Participants benefit from outstanding training facilities to support their studies, including industry standard recording and mixing studios and computer suites.

Studios and production suites are very well equipped to a high, professional standard, reflecting high industry standards. Participants are able to develop their skills on leading software and hardware to ensure they are highly employable in the sector on completion of their course. When questioned, participants were particularly complimentary about the availability of these facilities outside of class time, to allow them to apply their developing skills in a professional environment. The facilities are fundamental to the very good progress participants make on industry courses, this is good practice.

Appropriate classrooms and practical spaces are available to meet the assessment requirements of each industry course.

26. There are appropriate additional facilities for participants and staff

- | | | | | |
|------|---|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 26.1 | Participants have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private study, including library and IT resources. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 26.2 | Trainers have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 26.3 | Participants and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 26.4 | Participants and staff have access to storage for personal possessions where appropriate. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 26.5 | There are individual offices or rooms in which trainers and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | |
| 26.6 | Administrative offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the provider. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Satisfactory social spaces are provided. Participants can access the student common room at the Manchester campus to carry out private study and to relax and consume food and drink. An effective system allows participants to book more private spaces, such as studios, to practise and apply their practical skills. The system is clear and convenient and valued by participants at both the London and Manchester campuses.

Administrators, managers and trainers have access to suitable spaces to carry out consultations and administration duties and to store personal belongings. Trainers have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons and marking work.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated

Yes No

PART C - SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Numbering of action points aligns with that of the minimum standards

MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

Provider's Strengths

The Provider recruits well qualified and experienced industry professionals that use their significant, and current, vocational expertise to develop participants' applied, industry skills.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
8.2 The Provider must ensure that the outcomes of performance reviews and monitoring systems are effectively reported to inform the identification of prioritised actions for improvement.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
8.3 Quality improvement action plans must be fully implemented and regularly reviewed, to maintain and further improve the standard of education and the participant experience.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Provider's Strengths

Participants benefit from outstanding, industry-standard facilities which they use to make very good progress in developing the applied, technical and vocational skills, which are required by employers in the music and sound industry.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
15.1 The Provider must provide a clear statement of the level claimed, relative to the RQF, for each industry course awarded.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

PARTICIPANT WELFARE

Provider's Strengths

Participants benefit from good levels of personal support, small group sizes and a useful programme of social and enrichment events. As a result, participants are very satisfied with the quality of their educational experience and the impact of their programme on their progression and next steps.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
17.6 Managers must ensure that the required safeguarding arrangements are put in place with immediate effect, to ensure that any participants recruited under the age of 18 are safe and appropriately monitored.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

PREMISES AND FACILITIES

Provider's Strengths

Participants have access to high quality professional facilities that support their studies and skills progression very well.

Participants highly-value the access they have to industry standard recording studios and editing suites to apply and enhance their developing expertise.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

To be reviewed at the next inspection

The Provider should complete the re-branding of the London campus as soon as possible, to reflect the new Provider name.

It is recommended that attendance monitoring procedures are strengthened to ensure that all participants with low and falling attendance rates are contacted promptly to improve their attendance levels.

It is recommended that existing internal moderation mechanisms are clearly monitored, at the London campus, to provide appropriate validity and reliability to internal assessment outcomes, in line with the Provider's assessment policy.

The Provider should consider implementing a more formal progress review process to provide a clear audit trail of any academic concerns and to support participants with clear, specific and measurable targets to inform their improvement.

It is recommended that the assessment policy is reviewed to consider the introduction of formal re-submissions, where appropriate.

It is recommended that arrangements are put in place to make part-time industry course participants more aware of the specific welfare services available, during course induction.

The Provider should consider making the existing refund policy more explicitly clear to all participants who choose to register for industry course in-centre and not online.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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