

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: International School of Aerospace NDT Ltd

ADDRESS: Unit 2, Beech Avenue
Taverham
Norwich
NR8 6HW

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Simon Wright

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 8 May 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 16 July 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

The International School of Aerospace NDT Limited (ISA/the Provider) was founded in 1995 to train people, from the aerospace industry, about the theory and practice of Non-Destructive Testing (NDT). The Provider began training participants, both from the United Kingdom (UK) and overseas, in 1996. It is a private company limited by shares. In May 2016, there was a change of ownership and the company was sold to Morgan Ward NDT (Non-Destructive Testing) Limited, which is a large provider of NDT in the aerospace industry and is now the majority shareholder in ISA.

The Managing Director of Morgan Ward NDT Ltd is also the Managing Director of ISA. The day-to-day operation of the Provider is carried out by the School Director and the Chief Instructor is responsible for programme delivery. These posts are supported by one full-time and two part-time administrators, one of whom is responsible for the reception area. The Provider aims to make learning as enjoyable as possible, with participant welfare being a high priority.

Previously based at Norwich airport, ISA moved, in June 2017, to new more modern premises on an industrial site, located just outside Norwich city centre.

The Provider offers open courses, which are offered for participants from different company clients, as well as bespoke programmes, which are delivered at clients' premises. ISA has company clients who attend ISA open courses through their employees and clients who attend on their own behalf. The bespoke courses have been delivered in a range of countries, including Nigeria, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Lebanon, China, Switzerland and Ukraine. The Provider also offers courses in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.

ISA is approved by the British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing (BINDT) as an examination and training organisation.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Provider offers seven different NDT programmes. These are scheduled up to six times a year for delivery in Norwich. Programmes are offered on an occasional or a bespoke basis. While aimed principally at professionals in the aerospace industry, other participants involved in NDT also attend the courses, for example, maintenance staff working for Formula 1 racing teams.

The seven main NDT programmes are offered at Levels 1, 2 and 3 and are accredited by BINDT. These programmes cover eddy current testing, magnetic particle testing, penetrant testing, radiography, thermography, ultrasonic testing and ultrasonic phased array inspections. Also offered, up to Level 2, are aircraft wheel inspection, bond testing, radiographic film interpretation, management appreciation of NDT, overview of NDT and recertification examination programmes. All the programmes are between two and ten days in duration.

At the time of the inspection, there was a total of five participants undertaking courses with the Provider. Three participants were undertaking a ten-day Level 2 course in ultrasonic testing, one participant was taking a Level 2 eddy current recertification examination course and one participant was taking a Level 2 penetrant recertification examination course. All the participants were male and aged between 30 and 40 years. One participant was from Ireland and two from Serbia. All courses are delivered face to face, typically with the morning session covering theory and the afternoon used for practical work.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one day. Meetings took place with the School Director,

Quality Manager, an Instructor and participants. One lesson was observed and there was a tour of the building and teaching facilities.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	7-8 April 2009
Interim	9 June 2010
Random Spot Check	5 April 2011
Re-accreditation	12-13 June 2013
Interim	21 May 2015
Re-accreditation	12 – 13 January 2017
Supplementary	4 May 2017
Supplementary	26 September 2018

PART B – JUDGEMENTS 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

The role of Quality Manager has been enhanced with a member of staff having been promoted to focus on quality assurance processes and documentation. An additional full-time instructor has recently been appointed, who is based on site at Norwich to provide teaching, on site, to meet additional demands from clients. This provides additional capacity and continuity when the other trainers are delivering courses offsite. An additional part-time administrator has been employed to provide additional general office administrative support.

No new provision has been introduced although the Provider is experiencing increased demand for the courses. The current strategy is to develop the current provision and the supporting infrastructure before considering initiatives for new courses, possibly in different market sectors.

2. Response to actions points in last report

7.1 Feedback must also be collected from other stakeholders such as the employers in order that a wider range of opinion about the provision can be identified.

The small size of the provider and the nature of its close relationship with its stakeholders leads to feedback largely being gathered informally. Feedback is obtained from its clients, through conversations, and from the participants. The feedback and the appropriate actions to be taken are discussed at the Annual Management Review Meeting attended by all staff. Regular management and staff meetings, approximately every eight weeks, are also used to review more immediate feedback from stakeholders. This approach is suitable for ISA and is effective in identifying a wide range of opinion about the provision.

11.3 Classroom appraisal observations must be completed. Success criteria for the appraisal observations must also be identified and shared with those involved in the process.

The provider now has a well-developed and appropriate Instructor Peer Appraisal Scheme. Trainers are aware of this and understand the criteria upon which they are being appraised. The process is suitably documented and is shared with the trainers. The appraisal is focussed on the instructor's delivery and is effective in identifying strengths and areas to develop. The process would benefit from additional criteria which focus more on evidence of participants' learning in training sessions.

18.1 The provider must ensure international participants receive advice in advance that prepares them more fully for their stay in the UK.

Participants are provided with a pack of information prior to their arrival. This provides accommodation, travel and course information. Additionally, the website has been enhanced to provide support and advice on culture, travel, visas and other useful information. As participants are mature and generally working for international aerospace organisations, the level of support provided is adequate and appropriate.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The provider should ensure that all relevant quality manual and work instruction information is adapted and tailored to develop more personalised job descriptions as the organisation evolves.

There are clear jobs descriptions that match the organisational structure. The Quality Manual has been audited to ensure it meets requirements and is appropriate.

The provider should routinely review the content of the website and other publicity material to ensure it is always complete and that there are no discrepancies.

Subsequent to the change in company ownership in 2016, the website was fully reviewed, amended and updated. It is now up to date, comprehensive and consistent. The website maintenance is carried out by an external contractor based on the provider's requirements and supplied information

The provider should consider introducing a publishing policy to ensure all material is scrutinised and approved in order to eliminate errors before publication.

The provider now has a Publishing Policy which is part of the quality assurance process. Responsibility for published material is with the Quality Manager who signs off all material. This policy and process are robust, which ensures accuracy and consistency in published material.

The provider should consider how feedback data can be statistically analysed and presented to identify more clearly, for example, strengths and areas for improvement in the different services and programmes provided.

The provider takes feedback from participants at the end of each assessment and uses a spreadsheet to monitor results. An average of the grades is used to highlight any areas that may have issues or require investigation and improvements. This is effective in allowing all staff to identify areas of concern. Participant feedback is conducted informally, with small group sizes, of at most eight participants. This ensures feedback is obtained effectively during teaching sessions.

Curriculum plans should be reviewed at least annually to ensure they remain compliant with any changing requirements from the awarding body or industry. This process should be recorded.

All curriculum plans are under continuous review and formally reviewed annually as part of the quality assurance process. The review is recorded, as is the date of the next review. When documents are reviewed, this is not indicated on the document, this is only done if the document is revised. Formally indicating the document has been reviewed would be a valuable enhancement.

The provider should consider how the questioning techniques used by trainers in classes should be developed further.

All trainers have had training in teaching and appropriate questioning techniques are used in classes. The small group sizes are also effective in allowing the trainers to be aware of participants understanding of the material being delivered.

Participants would benefit from a greater range and depth of local information being made available.

The website has been updated to provide local information and this is effective.

The complaints procedure would benefit from being reviewed to identify the stages more clearly.

The complaints procedure is now fully described in the Quality Manual and each stage is clearly described. The current procedure is one of attempting to resolve the issue at earliest opportunity without the need to escalate it. As currently described, the procedure does not allow for, ultimately, an impartial and independent arbitrator to resolve the complaint. This should be added to the current procedure.

ISA should ensure a lease is signed and that premises are secured to avoid any disruption to programme delivery.

The provider has a signed lease for the premises.

The provider should consider ensuring access to the premises is routinely restricted when the administrator is not present.

The entrance to the premises is next to a glass hatch that links directly with the administrative area. The administrative area is always occupied and this ensures that there is effective controlled access to the premises.

The provider would benefit from having a company sign at the front edge of the forecourt to enable visitors to identify the premises more easily.

The premises are now clearly signposted with the company name and logo on the entrance doors.

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

ISA is effectively managed with a clear structure that is understood by all staff, although some administrative roles are not included in the organisational chart. Some staff have a number of roles within the organisation. This reflects the small size of the provider.

Much of the day-to-day communications between staff takes place informally. Online video conferencing is used effectively as key management staff are often offsite. There are regular all staff meetings, approximately every eight weeks. These are used well as an opportunity to share information, review progress and make decisions. There is an Annual Management Review where longer-term strategies, actions and issues are discussed. This meeting is fully recorded.

Administrative functions are appropriate with one full-time and one part-time administrator. Additionally, there is one part-time financial administrator. Clients and participants confirmed there is an effective administration support in place.

All staff are suitably qualified. Those involved in teaching must meet the exacting regulations of, and be approved by, BINDT, the relevant regulatory body for the industry.

The majority of participants are delegated by their employer who ensures they are qualified to attend the training. The nature of the highly regulated aerospace NDT industry largely leads to participants attending as part of a larger programme to enable them to work at a specific level within the industry.

Subsequent to previous inspections the provider has formalised an attendance policy and procedure, all participants being required to sign in for both morning and afternoon sessions.

Feedback is formally obtained from participants at the end of each course as well as informally at the end of each day. BINDT audits the provider and the summary of and outcomes from each audit provide a further feedback mechanism. Overall stakeholders' feedback is suitably obtained and acted on.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Academic management is effective, with a clear structure and clear lines of responsibility. The small size of the provider, with three trainers, facilitates the consistency of the learning experience.

The course delivery is effectively planned and delivered. Delivery is reviewed after each course, in addition to an annual review. The balance of teaching in the morning followed by practical work in the afternoon works well. The practical session is effective and involves the setting of tasks with support provided to the participants to enable them to complete the task. This approach is appropriate given the practical nature of the training.

All trainers are suitably qualified having undertaken training in teaching and are technically well qualified as well as approved by BINDT. Teaching strategies are varied and effective providing a stimulating environment for the participants. Peer and classroom appraisals are used to support trainers as teachers and this process is well documented.

The provider has recently made significant investment in industry standard NDT equipment and facilities. This represents good practice allowing for an easy transition from a training to a work environment.

Formative feedback is provided to the participant at the end of each day through a short assessment. This also provides feedback to the instructor on the participant's progress. This approach to formative feedback is effective and supports the participant to achieve the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful in the certification theory and practical examinations at the end of the course.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Participants indicate that they are well supported and informed prior to arrival at the provider's premises. Travel and accommodation information is readily available and suitable. Inspection findings confirm this view.

The provider has a well-documented complaints procedure. Should there be a need to escalate the complaint, it is clear how this should proceed.

The provider's Equality and Diversity Policy has been updated to include anti-radicalisation. A risk assessment form has been developed that covers the potential areas of radicalisation and completion of this indicates a low risk. Key staff have undertaken a suitable certified anti-radicalisation training course.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The provider has a 6-year lease on its premises starting from March 2017. This is suitable for the provider's current circumstances.

The premises are modern, clean and light and airy with suitable signing and safety information. The teaching room is of an appropriate size and is suitably equipped with both teaching equipment, such as a large screen, computer and a whiteboard, as well as NDT testing equipment for both demonstration and participant learning. There are practical workshop areas containing the necessary range of NDT equipment for use by participants. These have the necessary health and safety warning notices.

Theory examinations are taken in the classroom and, for practically based elements of examinations, the workshop is used. The rooms are suitable for these purposes.

The building has a wireless network available to participants and has rooms for participants to undertake private study. There is a large kitchen that can be used by both staff and participants to prepare food and drinks. Participants indicated they were completely satisfied with the premises.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The small team of trainers and support staff work together effectively to deliver the requirements of their clients.

The provider’s recent focus on improving its performance subsequent to the change of ownership has been effective. This is reflected in positive feedback from clients and participants as well as in an increased demand for its training services.

There has been a substantial investment in industry standards NDT equipment to ensure the provider utilises the latest high-quality technical equipment. This should be seen an indicator of the parent company’s commitment to ISA and the delivery of high-quality training.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

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

ISA is recommended to include all the administrative roles in the organisation chart for clarity.

The provider should consider enhancing its classroom appraisal observations to include criteria associated with evidence of participant learning.

When a document has been reviewed, the provider should consider indicating the date of this on the document, even if it has not been revised.

Currently there is no provision in the complaint’s procedure for impartial and independent arbitration should internal resolution not be possible. This should be addressed by the provider.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE