BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

Short Course Provider (SCP) Full Inspection

ORGANISATION: London Academy of Trading

ADDRESS: 5th Floor Sceptre Court
40 Tower Hill
London
EC3N 4DX

HEAD OF ORGANISATION: Mr Duncan Donald

DATE OF INSPECTION: 17-18 July 2017

ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION: Unaccredited

DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:

- Accreditation awarded for the full four-year period.
- Decision on accreditation deferred.
- Award of accreditation refused.

Date: 25 August 2017
1. Background to the organisation

The London Academy of Trading (LAT) was established in 2010 with the aim of providing training for traders in financial markets. The first cohort of students began in February 2011. It is a private limited company, which is located on the fifth floor of an office block in the City of London, overlooking the Tower of London.

In 2014, the Global University Systems Group (GUS), which owns a range of academic institutions and training organisations globally, bought a majority shareholding in LAT. This positioning, within a much larger organisation, provides LAT with access to a number of important corporate processes and resources. These include human resources, Information Technology (IT), logistics, quality assurance and finance.

The senior leadership of LAT consists of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Academic Dean and the Director. The CEO of LAT reports to the Director and to a GUS director.

2. Brief description of the current provision

LAT delivers a 12 week Level 5 Diploma in Applied Financial Trading, which is accredited by the Association of Business Executives (ABE). It has monthly intakes of students. Students can attend full-time in classes, can study remotely or can undertake a combination of classroom based learning with remote learning. The teaching includes three webinars a day, which provide up-to-date analysis and interpretation of the trends in financial markets.

At the time of the inspection, 79 participants were studying with LAT. Three of the participants were doing a one month practical trading course. The rest were on either the first, second or third month of the 12 week diploma programme. All participants were resident in the United Kingdom (UK) and one was under the age of 18. The vast majority of the participants were male.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over two days. The inspection included scrutinising documentation. Meetings were held with participants from the courses, the trainers and mentors, support staff and managers. The inspection also included a tour of the training venue and offices, which include a 36 desk trading floor. The observation of teaching and learning including observing a webinar. All the staff cooperated very well with the inspection and the information required was clearly presented.
PART B - JUDGEMENT AND EVIDENCE
The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider.

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.

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.

1.3 There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff and those working at the delivery venue/s.

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

Comments
The management structure is well defined. Senior managers are well qualified and experienced traders. Effective oversight is provided by a director from GUS.

2. The administration of the provider is effective

2.1 Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties.

2.2 The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the provider.

2.3 The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood.

2.4 Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the provider.

2.5 Data collection and collation systems are effective.

2.6 Administrative offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the provider.

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

Comments
The business runs smoothly and is effectively supported by efficient administrative processes as well as the GUS shared services.

All appropriate policies and procedures are in place. These are appropriately overseen by the quality assurance staff from GUS.
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.

3.2 Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment.

3.3 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff.

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

Comments

Appropriate, systems are in place for the recruitment of staff. These are well supported by detailed policies and procedures. LAT is appropriately assisted, in this area, by the staff from the human resources department within GUS.

3.3 Appropriate and thorough appraisal procedures, including the associated paperwork, have been put in place recently. They have not yet been implemented although this is due to happen shortly.

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.

4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date.

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

Comments

The LAT makes use of a very professional website, which provides a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the courses and facilities on offer. The website includes testimonials from previous participants.

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.

5.2 A formal application process ensures that participants meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified.

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.

5.4 Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated.

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

Comments

Participant recruitment is well managed and appropriately supported by detailed policies and procedures.

Applicants are required to complete a statement in support of their application, including the reason for choosing the course and any prior experience of trading they may have. This ensures that applicants are enrolled on an appropriate course, which meets their needs.
6. **There is an appropriate policy on participant attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it**

6.1 There is a clear and published policy on participant attendance and punctuality. [Yes] [No]

6.2 Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all participants, collated centrally and reviewed. [Yes] [No] [NA]

6.3 Participant absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken. [Yes] [No]

**This standard is judged to be:** [Met] [Partially Met] [Not Met]

**Comments**
LAT encourages 100 per cent attendance but a minimum of 80 per cent is required. Attendance is monitored appropriately and electronic records of attendance are maintained. As a result, attendance rates are very high.

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

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. [Yes] [No]

7.2 Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis. [Yes] [No]

7.3 The feedback is reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary. [Yes] [No]

7.4 There is a mechanism for reporting on the provider’s response to the feedback to the participant body. [Yes] [No]

**This standard is judged to be:** [Met] [Partially Met] [Not Met]

**Comments**
LAT uses an external and independent on-line facility to gather participant feedback at the end of the course. This ensures the impartiality of the feedback.

LAT responds promptly to the feedback received.
8. **The provider has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement**

8.1 There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the provider’s performance.  
8.2 Reports are compiled which present the results of the provider’s reviews and incorporate action plans.  
8.3 Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed.

**This standard is judged to be:**  
- [ ] Met  
- [ ] Partially Met  
- [ ] Not Met

**Comments**
LAT reviews its financial performance well and produces reports related to this aspect of the business.

The staff monitor the progress of the participants and keep appropriate records, which indicate high success rates.

They do not monitor the success of participant cohorts over time in order to assess whether there has been any improvement or decline from cohort to cohort and, if so, why. Participant feedback is monitored carefully through an outside agency.

Appropriate actions are taken as required, as a result of these reviews.

**INSPECTION AREA - TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT**

9. **Programme management is effective**

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.  
9.2 Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered.  
9.3 The allocation of trainers to classes provides for a consistent learning experience and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency.  
9.4 There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures for the acquisition of teaching and learning resources.

**This standard is judged to be:**  
- [ ] Met  
- [ ] Partially Met  
- [ ] Not Met

**Comments**
Programme management is effective.

Participants benefit from a well structured training programme and access to high quality trainers and trading floor mentors.

The good quality training materials are developed in-house.
10. The courses are planned and delivered in ways that enable participants to succeed

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.

10.2 Lessons and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body.

10.3 Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations.

10.4 Participants are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills.

10.5 The academic backgrounds and particular needs of participants are taken into account in the classroom delivery of the course.

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

Comments

The courses are delivered using an effective blend of academic content, both face-to-face and on-line, combined with mentoring. Participants also have considerable opportunities to trade and apply the risk management strategies they have covered. As a result, LAT provides a very good learning environment and students achieve high pass rates and develop effective trading skills.

The three daily webinars support the teaching and learning very effectively. They provide timely and relevant analysis and interpretation of trends in financial markets.

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

11.1 Trainers are appropriately qualified and experienced.

11.2 Trainers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skill which allows them to deliver the content of courses effectively.

11.3 The appraisal procedures for trainers incorporate regular classroom observation.

11.4 Trainers are supported in their continuing professional development and enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the learning of participants.

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.

11.6 Trainers employ effective strategies to involve all participants in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content.

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

Comments

The trainers and mentors are also traders. Therefore, they are continually practising their trade and are able to keep up-to-date with trends in the markets and refine their trading skills.

Participants report that they find the support of trainers and mentors particularly helpful and highly value their input.
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
Around 20 hours' of online content is available to support participants along with links to references and other resources. This enables the participants to reinforce their learning very effectively.

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. | ☐ Yes ☐ 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. | ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA |
| 13.3 Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of participants who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate. | ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA |
| 13.4 Participants are made aware of how their progress relates to their targeted level of achievement. | ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ 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. | ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA |
| 13.6 Participants have appropriate access to trainers outside class time. | ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA |

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

Comments
A clear assessment schedule is included in the course planning.

Staff provide high levels of support and trading advice. This results in participants being well prepared for their assessments. It also contributes towards the high success rates and high levels of skill development of participants undertaking the trading diploma.

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>NA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the NQF/QCF and evidence that participants who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>External moderators are involved in the assessment process where appropriate.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

Comments

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>NA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>The provider complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration where appropriate.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Comments

The assessment procedures meet the requirements of the awarding body, which has provided positive feedback on the assessment practice.
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.  
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA

17.2 Participants receive appropriate advice before the start of the programme.  
[ ] Yes [ ] No

17.3 Participants receive an appropriate induction and relevant information at the start of the programme.  
[ ] Yes [ ] No

17.4 Participants are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support.  
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA

17.5 The provider has policies in place to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour.  
[ ] Yes [ ] No

17.6 Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place and are regularly reviewed to keep all participants safe.  
[ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] NA

17.7 Effective arrangements are in place to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.  
[ ] Yes [ ] No

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

Comments

Students are well supported by the staff. A trained support officer is available as and when required.

A detailed practice handbook, which contains useful advice for staff in terms of meeting the needs of students, includes signposting information to access additional support such as external counselling.

Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place and relevant staff have undergone Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place and all staff have been trained to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

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.  
[ ] Yes [ ] No

18.2 International participants receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area.  
[ ] Yes [ ] No

18.3 Information and advice specific to international participants continues to be available throughout the course of study.  
[ ] Yes [ ] No

18.4 Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations. Where possible, participants have access to speakers of their own first language.  
[ ] Yes [ ] No

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

Comments
19. **The fair treatment of participants is ensured**

19.1 Participants apply for and are enrolled on courses under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions.  
   - Yes  No

19.2 Participants have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course.  
   - Yes  No

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

**Comments**

Students are enrolled on courses under fair and transparent terms. They have access to an appropriate complaints procedure.

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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.  
   - Yes  No

20.2 Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted where participants under 18 are accommodated.  
   - Yes  No  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.  
   - Yes  No

20.4 A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of participants.  
   - Yes  No

20.5 Separate accommodation blocks are provided for participants under 18.  
   - Yes  No  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. ☐ Yes ☐ 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. ☐ Yes ☐ No

21.3 The provider has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision. ☐ Yes ☐ No

21.4 Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and participants before and during the placement. ☐ Yes ☐ No

21.5 Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for participant feedback and prompt action taken in the event of problems. ☐ Yes ☐ 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. ☐ Yes ☐ No

22.2 The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of participants. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

22.3 Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability by the majority of participants. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

22.4 Any activities organised by the provider are supervised by a responsible representative with suitable qualifications and experience. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA

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

Comments
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.

23.2 Where required, the provider has access to suitable external premises for training purposes of a temporary or occasional nature.

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

Comments

LAT holds a long lease on the premises which runs until 2039.

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.

24.2 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness.

24.3 There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories), made readily available to participants, staff and visitors.

24.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to participants, staff and visitors.

24.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information.

24.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of participants and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors.

24.7 There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness.

24.8 There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms.

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

Comments

Training takes place within a secure and very professional business environment, which includes a trading floor.

The premises are maintained to high standard.

24.8 The trading floor gets very warm, especially on a hot day, despite the use of a number of fans. More efficient air-conditioning is required.
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.  
Yes No

25.2 Training rooms and any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each course.  
Yes No NA

25.3 There are facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required on each course.  
Yes No NA

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

**Comments**

Classrooms are spacious and appropriately equipped.

Students benefit from access to a trading floor. The trading floor features 36 trading desks, which are equipped with multi-monitor work stations and professional trading software. This provides a very good learning environment.

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.  
Yes No NA

26.2 Trainers have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation.  
Yes No NA

26.3 Participants and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate.  
Yes No NA

26.4 Participants and staff have access to storage for personal possessions where appropriate.  
Yes No 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.  
Yes No

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

**Comments**

Break-out spaces and a kitchen are available for staff and students. There is also a well-stocked library.

Staff have access to appropriate office space.

**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

LAT is well managed and efficiently run by very experienced and well qualified staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions required</th>
<th>Priority H/M/L</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3 The Provider must implement the recently established appraisal procedures for staff.</td>
<td>High, Medium, Low</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Provider’s strengths

The courses are very well structured and provide a flexible blend of academic teaching, on-line support, mentoring and practical trading experience, which effectively develops appropriate trading skills.

Success rates are very high on the diploma course.

Teaching and mentoring are of a very high standard and are provided by experienced and well qualified staff.

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<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>High, Medium, Low</td>
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</table>

PARTICIPANT WELFARE

Provider’s strengths

Trainers and mentors provide very good support for students.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>High, Medium, Low</td>
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PREMISES AND FACILITIES

Provider’s strengths

Students benefit from access to a well-equipped professional trading floor, within which they can develop their trading skills.

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<tr>
<th>Actions required</th>
<th>Priority H/M/L</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24.8 The Provider must improve the air conditioning arrangements for the trading floor.</td>
<td>High, Medium, Low</td>
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</table>

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The Provider is recommended to improve its systems for reviewing its academic performance by monitoring the success of participant cohorts over time in order to assess whether there has been any improvement or decline from cohort to cohort and, if so, why.
COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS