BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION
(Online, Distance & Blended Learning)

PROVIDER: Online Education Proprietary Limited

ADDRESS: 4407/4 Daydream Street
Warriewood
New South Wales
2102
Australia

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Anthony Mondello

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Probation Accreditation

DATE OF INSPECTION: 26-27 August 2020

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 26 November 2020

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1.   Background to the provider

Online Education Proprietary Limited (the Provider) is a privately owned educational provider that offers a range of online courses. It is located in Warriewood, which is a suburb in northern Sydney, Australia. The Provider was founded and registered in 2006, as a proprietary limited company in Australia, by its present owner.

The Provider's objective is to be a global leader in its field, with a strong focus on skill-orientated learning. It aims to bring together highly experienced professionals and inspired individuals who wish to improve personally and professionally.

The owner of the Provider works remotely for the greater part of the year and the day-to-day running of the operation is managed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and his team of 11 local part- and full-time staff. The CEO reports directly to the owner and is supported by a small management team. Tutors and learner support staff are located in countries around the world.

The Provider makes use of serviced offices in 50 overseas locations. These provide a mail-forwarding facility and serve to reassure online applicants that there is a local presence.

2.   Brief description of the current provision

Online Education Proprietary Limited currently runs five online courses. These are Interior Design, Photography, Art Appreciation, Makeup Artistry and Nutrition. They are based on 12 modules, each of which can normally be completed in a month. The modules are downloaded by the learner and can be worked through at the learner's own pace. Assignments are set for each module and, after the first two modules, learners are required to submit and pass a module before they have access to the next module. The courses can be completed in about 24 weeks. However, learners may take up to one year to complete, or 18 months for the accredited Australian version.

Learners who have completed their course can opt for an advanced module in their subject. These are single modules with a further assignment and offer the learner a chance to pursue a particular field of interest. The advanced modules are offered, for example, in wedding photography, photographing food, and kitchen and bathroom design. Advanced modules for makeup artistry are in preparation. The Provider is looking to further extend the range of courses it provides and to offer further language versions.

The five courses are currently offered in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Dutch and Japanese. For each of these courses, there are tutors as well as international student support team members and social media managers who work in that language.

The tutors are professionals working in their field of expertise. Many are authors of books or contributors to journals and magazines. Prospective applicants for courses can view the profiles of the tutors on the Provider's website.

In 2019, there were 12,000 enrolments. The majority of learners are from a wide range of English-speaking markets, including Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland and South Africa. The courses are aimed at adults. However, a small number of learners aged 16–17 years are enrolled each year. Learners under 16 years of age are not accepted onto any of the Provider's courses.

The Provider employs tutors on a freelance basis. There are currently about 50 tutors worldwide with more being recruited.

At the time of the inspection, there were 151,260 learners enrolled, of whom 156 were under the age of 18 years. Learners are enrolled continuously throughout the year.

3.   Inspection process

The inspection was carried out over two half-days by one inspector making use of remote online communication methods. The inspector carried out discussions with the CEO, the Global Operations Manager (GOM) and the staff member responsible for student support, human resource support and safeguarding. A wide range of electronic documentation was also scrutinised. The Provider was very well prepared for the inspection and cooperated fully with the inspector.

4.   Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	9-11 April 2018
Supplementary	17-20 September 2018

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

With regard to the provision, the Provider has developed and introduced a Nutrition course under the heading of the Nutrition Institute.

2. Response to actions points in last report

There were no actions in the last report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider is advised to explore ways within its enrolment procedure to ensure that when minors are enrolled, their parents or guardians are notified that they should monitor contributions to the social media sites.

A clear message has been placed on the Provider's online platform warning that minors are enrolled and that their parents or guardians should monitor their contributions to social media sites. However, the minors' parents or guardians are not automatically informed that they have enrolled on one of the Provider's courses or are provided with access to the Provider's online platform. As such, parents or guardians may not be aware of the need to monitor the relevant social media sites.

The Provider is advised to look at ways in which it can include all students in the feedback process.

A comprehensive system to encourage and obtain feedback from all learners has been developed and implemented. Feedback is analysed and reviewed in detail by managers and tutors and is used to take appropriate action where necessary.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met ☐ Partially Met ☐ Not Met
Comments

The Provider is very well managed. A clear management structure is in place, with individual roles and responsibilities fully understood by staff. Senior managers are highly successful in providing clear educational direction and ensuring that the appropriate resources to introduce new programmes of study successfully are in place. As a result, the Provider has successfully introduced its Nutrition course and experienced a period of growth in overall learner numbers.

Senior managers are suitably qualified and highly experienced in providing online learning. They fully understand their areas of responsibilities and are very effective in carrying them out. Communication between the Provider's staff is good and includes a regular newsletter and a range of scheduled meetings. At these meetings, staff are informed of any change in the strategic direction of the Provider and any operational issues, and the staff are able to raise any concerns that they might have.

Administration support is effective and successfully supports managers, learners and the day-to-day running of the Provider. Staff are appropriate in number for the needs of the Provider, suitably qualified and experienced, and have formal job descriptions. As a result, they understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities well.

Systems for regularly reviewing the performance of staff are good. Formal appraisal reviews are carried out and clearly identify any issues that may be of concern to the Provider or raised by the learners. Action or developmental plans are completed and used effectively to bring about improvement.

The Provider's website and online platform provide clear information, including procedure documents relating to course requirements and assessment.

4.2   Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met
Comments

Programme management and course development are very good. The CEO and GOM have extensive experience of delivering online courses and provide clear and effective oversight of the delivery and development of the curriculum. As a result, the content and delivery of courses are regularly reviewed to ensure that the online materials are up to date and meet the needs of the learners.

Adequate numbers of appropriately qualified tutors are available for each course offered. Tutors are highly experienced in their subject area and in the delivery of online courses. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the special challenges and demands of online learning and provide high levels of support to course learners to ensure that they have the best possible chance of passing their programme of study.

Learners are assigned to a single tutor, with a substitute tutor available to cover any sickness absence of the assigned tutor. The allocation of tutors to courses is highly effective in providing a consistent learning experience for the learners, and regular monitoring by the Provider ensures consistency across the range of courses.

Assessment strategies are well developed and clearly linked to the achievement of defined learning outcomes. Learners are encouraged and enabled, though the online course materials, to develop their independent learning skills. They are given clear guidelines on timescales for submitting assignments. Submissions are effectively monitored on the Provider's online platform, with timely reminders sent where needed.

4.3   Learner Support (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met
Comments

A comprehensive system for providing learner support is in place that meets the needs of the learners effectively. The Provider's website provides a comprehensive overview of the courses on offer, any prior language or educational requirements and details of how each course will be delivered. All required specialist equipment needed to complete the course successfully is clearly highlighted. Admissions staff are also available should the applicant require any additional information prior to enrolment or the start of the course. The information provided is clear and allows applicants to gain a good understanding as to whether their chosen course meets their current skills, knowledge and needs.

The course materials and the online platform used for their delivery are highly developed and assist and support learners to learn effectively and efficiently. The system is easy to navigate and information technology support staff are available to provide advice and resolve any technical issues that may arise. The platform monitors learner progress and allows tutors and support staff to identify quickly any learners who are falling behind schedule with their assignments. These learners are contacted in a timely manner and are provided with support and encouragement to continue with their course.

A clear and fair complaints procedure is in place and made available to all learners. A link to the British Accreditation Council's complaints procedure is also provided on the Provider's online platform.

> Course materials are comprehensive, of a very high quality and appropriate to online delivery. Their content reflects current knowledge and is specifically designed to engage and motivate the learners. Materials are well presented, regularly reviewed and revised, and provide a wide range of activities to support learning. As a result, the vast majority of learners achieve the programme learning objectives and successfully complete their course.

4.4   Management of Quality (spot check)

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

Comments

> Effective systems for the monitoring and review of the Provider's performance are in place. Detailed reports are compiled and regularly reviewed by senior managers. Within these reports, a wide range of key data is provided, analysed and reviewed. Detailed action plans are developed, implemented and regularly reviewed by appropriate staff.
>
> Comprehensive systems are in place to monitor learners' progress. The Provider's online platform is used effectively to monitor each learner's progression and alerts managers and tutors where learners fall behind what is expected in terms of progress. As a result, prompt intervention is taken where appropriate.
>
> Feedback from learners and other relevant stakeholders is regularly sought and reviewed in detail by management. This includes a mid-point course survey and a bi-annual report. Appropriate action is taken where necessary and monitored to completion by a nominated quality assurance team member.

4.5   Premises and Facilities – face-to-face component (spot check)

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

Comments

> The Provider owns the office suite from which it operates.
>
> The offices are fit for purpose and provide an effective working environment.
>
> The Provider's premises are not used by learners or tutors.

4.6   Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.   ☒ Yes   ☐ No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

A clear vision for the future development of the provision is in place and understood and shared by the Provider's staff.

Highly effective systems are used to monitor learners' progress and to provide additional support where necessary.

Course materials of a very high quality and effectively support learning.

Tutors are highly experienced and often have extensive professional practice in their fields of expertise.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

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

The Provider is advised to explore ways within its enrolment procedure to ensure that when minors are enrolled, their parents or guardians are notified that they should monitor contributions to the social media sites.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE