



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER:	Hastings Business Training
ADDRESS:	45a London Road St Leonards-on-Sea East Sussex TN37 6AY
HEAD OF PROVIDER:	Mr Isah Abdullahi
ACCREDITATION STATUS:	Accredited
DATE OF INSPECTION:	18 November 2020
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:	Continued accreditation, 28 January 2021

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Hastings Business Training (HBT/the Provider) is a privately owned training provider based in St Leonards-on-Sea in East Sussex. It offers unaccredited short courses in management, financial auditing, Information Technology (IT) and public sector administration, as well as specialist courses for those working in the petroleum and gas industries.

HBT aims to provide courses that meet the requirements of organisations and the individual Continuing Professional Development (CPD) needs of professionals. Its goal is to assist organisations in realising their objectives by providing carefully designed specialist provision, and to embrace changes in technology in the delivery of training so as to continuously improve its services to clients.

HBT was established in St Leonards-on-Sea by the current sole proprietor in 2005. The proprietor is closely involved in the day-to-day running of the organisation and is supported by an Administration Manager.

The administrative offices of HBT are located in St Leonards-on-Sea. Hired premises in locations agreed with the clients are used for the delivery of the courses.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The courses offered are based on a wide variety of CPD and corporate strategy needs, primarily in the areas of corporate and executive management, finance, accounting, IT, and the needs of the petroleum and oil and gas industries, including petroleum economics and oil and gas accounting.

HBT offers in-house courses to clients where a number of company executives wish to undertake a particular course. The courses are targeted at suitably qualified, graduate and postgraduate mature professionals who have reached senior positions in their organisations. The employer organisation decides on and commissions the training and selects the participants from its staff based on their role and identified CPD requirements. All provision is delivered by freelance trainers who are specialists in their fields.

The duration of each course ranges from one to two weeks. Courses are delivered on a face-to-face lecture and workshop basis, with the trainer acting as a facilitator to relatively small groups of participants. Occasionally, courses are provided on a one-to-one basis. Programmes are also run outside the United Kingdom (UK) in overseas locations, including Dubai and Malaysia, mainly for the oil and gas sector. The British Accreditation Council's accreditation only applies to courses delivered in the UK.

At the time of the inspection, no courses were being delivered by HBT and have not been delivered since late 2019 as a result of travel restrictions. Typically, participants are mature professionals coming mainly from Nigeria and other African countries. The majority are male. No participants under 18 years of age are recruited.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out remotely by one inspector over one day. Online meetings were held with the Proprietor, the Administration Manager and three facilitators. Office facilities were viewed through an online tour, and a range of documentation was scrutinised. The Provider engaged positively with requests for information and with the inspection process.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Stage 2	2 September 2009
Stage 3	18 November 2009
Interim	21 October 2010
Re-accreditation	22–23 October 2013
Interim	23 February 2016
Re-accreditation	28–29 August 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 institution.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, the Business Development Manager has left the Provider and these duties are now being undertaken by the Proprietor. The Proprietor is working with the Administration Manager to explore opportunities to expand HBT's client base. Business opportunities are being explored in a wider range of countries, including Uganda and Tanzania, with a particular focus on meeting the needs of the emerging oil and gas industries in those countries.

The number of courses on offer has been expanded since the last inspection. New courses in the areas of management, finance and accounting, and pensions management have been developed.

2. Response to actions points in last report

2.5 The Provider must maintain a standardised record of information on each cohort of participants to ensure ease of access to relevant details when required.

A standardised file for each participant is maintained in a secure and accessible electronic system. The file is made available to teaching staff as appropriate by the Administration Manager. Paper copies are stored in a locked cabinet in a file storage room, and electronic versions of the records are password protected and accessible only to the Proprietor and Administration Manager.

3.2 The Provider must maintain files for all freelance facilitators containing evidence of identity and right to work in the UK, copies of qualifications, and for those currently employed, contracts.

Appropriate and complete files for all freelance facilitators and employed staff are kept securely in a locked cabinet in the file storage room. Files include evidence of identity checks, copies of qualifications, evidence of right to work in the UK and copies of signed contracts.

3.2 For all new staff the Provider must ensure that references are supplied from the previous employers to confirm experience.

As part of the recruitment process, and in accordance with the recruitment policy, a minimum of two references are sought for all new staff. References are obtained from current and previous employers to confirm applicants' experience and suitability.

8.2 The Provider must produce performance reports annually, incorporating evidence from reviews of all activity to better measure the success of the organisation and record progress against areas for improvement.

The Provider produces an annual performance management report based on the evaluation of courses by facilitators and the formal feedback from participants gathered through end-of-course surveys. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are clearly set out and the evaluation of each individual KPI supports the identification of areas for improvement. The Provider also has an ongoing action plan that is discussed at management meetings and is appropriately linked to performance reviews and business development needs.

24.4 Information on fire evacuation must be provided to all visitors to the HBT offices.

Fire evacuation information is made available to all visitors to the HBT offices through clear signage and evacuation instructions which are posted in offices and corridors and clearly visible. Staff are on hand to direct visitors to the designated exits and muster points.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider should consider publishing the policies relevant to facilitators on the website to ensure that this information is easily accessible.

Policies relevant to facilitators are now published on the website, including those covering the prevention of radicalisation and extremism and abuse and unacceptable behaviour, complaints, and a facilitators' policy to support the delivery of learning and teaching. Facilitators confirm that these are clear and easily accessible.

The Provider should consider developing a quality assurance procedure, possibly in the form of a flowchart, to ensure that all available information is used in performance review.

A clear and appropriate quality assurance process has been introduced, which is based on a flowchart. The procedure details the key stages and responsibilities for quality assurance, and facilitators have been informed of the requirements. However, the full document has not been shared with all the facilitators, and at present is not available on the website.

It is recommended that the facilitator observation report should be extended to include a summary of key strengths and areas for development to focus on key issues from the many aspects currently covered on the form. A copy of the report should be provided to the facilitator to support their development.

The facilitator observation form has been revised and now includes a facilitator feedback form. The feedback form requires the observer to note key strengths, areas for improvement and any agreed actions, and is signed by both the facilitator and the observer. Records of all observations are kept in the administration offices.

It is recommended that participants should be provided with a copy of the participant handbook containing references to all relevant policies during induction, rather than relying on client HR officers to provide it.

All participants are provided with a copy of the participant pack by the Administration Manager as part of their induction process. This contains all relevant policies and key information, including contact numbers. The participant handbook, which includes travel advice, is sent to the client organisation's Human Resources department so it can be forwarded to the individual participant in advance of the course.

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

A clearly documented management structure is in place and is appropriately supported by job descriptions. The Proprietor, as the sole owner, undertakes the management functions and is supported by the Administration Manager. All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced to carry out their roles effectively.

Effective communication between management and the freelance facilitators takes place through telephone calls and e-mails. The facilitators confirmed that they have a good understanding of the expectations of the outcomes of courses they are asked to deliver. However, the facilitators have limited access to the wider range of materials and documentation, including the quality assurance process.

The administrative support provided by the Administration Manager is sufficient to meet the needs of the Provider. The Administration Manager is well qualified and effectively meets the administrative requirements of HBT. Policies are clearly documented and available to stakeholders through the website and the participant handbook. Data collection and management systems are secure. Files are maintained

for the participants and facilitators and kept in secure cabinets. Electronic information is password protected.

A clear staff recruitment policy ensures that all staff are suitably qualified and experienced, and that references are checked. All facilitators are experienced professionals who work for the Provider to deliver courses as required, alongside their employment in other institutions. A system of regular observations of teaching and reviews of the participants' feedback serve to monitor the performance of facilitators effectively. A formal appraisal for permanent staff is conducted annually.

The course brochure is available through the HBT website and provides clear information about the Provider and the wide range of courses offered. The course outlines are designed to support client organisations in identifying courses that meet their needs. The specific course content and delivery locations are customised to meet the client's requirements and the CPD needs of its selected staff. This flexible and tailored approach to meeting client needs represents good practice.

All participants are well-educated professionals, most to graduate or postgraduate level. Whilst there are no formal entry requirements, the Provider works closely with client organisations to ensure that the courses are appropriate to meet the identified CPD needs. All participant details are securely held in the file storage office.

A clear policy requires full attendance by all participants, and registers are kept. Any absences are noted by the facilitators and promptly followed up by the Administration Manager. Confirmation of the level of attendance is sent to client organisations as required.

Feedback is obtained from participants informally on an ongoing basis by facilitators and the Administration Manager, who attends course venues. It is also collected formally through a clear end-of-course participant survey. When any concerns are raised informally, these are quickly reviewed by the management and appropriate action is taken and participants are informed. End-of-course feedback is collated and analysed by managers and used to inform the ongoing development of courses.

The annual performance management report is used to review performance and standards. The report draws on the formal feedback from participants and facilitators effectively. Success is measured against individual KPIs and areas for further development are identified. This informs the management action plan, which is regularly reviewed in management meetings.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The courses are effectively managed. The Proprietor has oversight of all course management and selects facilitators with appropriate knowledge and experience to deliver the short courses at the hired venues effectively. Courses are clearly timetabled and appropriate rooms allocated according to group size and delivery requirements. Appropriate resources to support each course are provided to the participants by the facilitators, who draw on materials from the Provider as well as their own sources. Delivery plans are submitted by facilitators a few weeks in advance of course delivery for review and approval by the Proprietor. This ensures a good level of consistency in the quality of the course delivery.

The courses are delivered in an interactive way with a focus on supporting participants' understanding of key concepts and their application. Participants are invited to share their objectives and expectations at the start of the course, and delivery is adapted as appropriate to ensure that all participants are able to relate to the content effectively. The activities used enable participants to engage with the course content well and to receive individual appropriate support and feedback. Key course materials are provided, including additional reading, and group work and discussions enable participants to apply their learning. The tailored course delivery that effectively supports individual objectives and needs represents good practice.

All facilitators are highly qualified in their fields and have experience of lecturing at Higher Education level, as well as delivering industry-based courses drawing on their qualifications and sector experience. Feedback from participants indicates a high level of satisfaction with the course delivery, and facilitators are regularly observed by the Proprietor and Administration Manager. A revised observation form has been developed to enable observers to provide facilitators with feedback and to identify good practice and areas for development. However, there are few opportunities for facilitators to share their experience and to enhance their training skills through the effective sharing of best practice. However, facilitators have access to CPD through their work with their primary employers, including pedagogical skills.

A range of study materials is made available to participants as part of each course. Links to additional online resources are also provided. Laptops are provided to participants for use in the classroom and private study for IT and finance or technical courses, allowing participants to access additional materials and work through case studies as appropriate.

Whilst the courses do not include summative assessment, facilitators provide oral feedback to participants on their performance through practical and formative activities. Facilitators are also available to all participants outside class time to offer additional guidance and support.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Administration Manager is responsible for participant welfare and is present during course delivery. Participants receive the participant handbook electronically before they arrive for the course. As part of a clear induction programme, participants are given a pack that includes information on out-of-hours emergency numbers and copies of policies on discrimination, radicalisation and extremism.

All participants come from outside the UK. They receive appropriate information in advance of the course, including advice on travel and accommodation. Information is provided on the local area, including local venues and events that may be of interest. The Provider takes into account effectively the cultural and religious considerations of participants, including dietary requirements, when booking hotel venues and ordering meals.

Fair treatment of participants is assured through the transparent terms and conditions that are published in the Provider's promotional brochure. Participants have access to the Administration Manager and facilitators throughout the course and are able to raise any concerns, which are promptly addressed. The pack of information they receive includes the clear HBT complaints procedure, along with the BAC complaints process.

Given the short duration of the courses, there is limited opportunity for social events. Information on local places to eat out is provided to participants, along with places of interest they may like to visit, and the Administration Manager and the Proprietor are available to organise any social activities that are requested. As part of the course, the final day includes a sightseeing tour led by a professional guide and participants are accompanied by the Administration Manager. Feedback has shown that this tour is appreciated by the participants.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The office premises are owned by the Proprietor. Hired venues for course delivery are of a high standard, being located in good-quality hotels. The course locations are agreed with the client organisation in advance.

The delivery venues provide good accommodation that meets appropriate health and safety requirements, including suitable fire evacuation procedures and signage. Visitors to the Provider's office premises also receive appropriate information on fire evacuation procedures through clear information and evacuation instructions displayed in offices and corridors. Staff are on hand to ensure that visitors are safely evacuated and escorted to muster points in the event of an emergency.

The delivery venues selected provide good-quality rooms for course delivery, which are tailored to the size of the group and include appropriate visual media and wireless access. All the venues are visited in advance of any course to ensure that rooms are laid out as requested and menus selected reflect any participant preferences or dietary requirements.

All venues selected have comfortable break-out areas and good catering facilities, and participants have access to social relaxation areas. Preparatory work on course materials is carried out by the freelance facilitators off site, and the office premises offer suitable rooms for meetings and the effective administration of the courses.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The range of short courses is customised to meet the requirements of client organisations and the CPD needs of its selected staff.

The interactive and adaptive delivery model operated for short courses enables participants to apply their learning and gain constructive individual and group feedback from the facilitators.

The flexible and responsive social programme includes advice on events and places to eat, and the final day's organised sightseeing tour provides a broader social experience for the participants.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

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

The Provider should ensure that the quality assurance process document is made available to all facilitators electronically to promote their understanding of how quality assurance is managed.

It is recommended that the Provider develops a suitable electronic document storage system to provide all facilitators with access to key documentation and course materials to enhance their access to useful resources.

The Provider should consider organising events for facilitators to share their experience, build on good practice and engage with new course and other process developments.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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