



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: London School of Trends

ADDRESS: Level 2/5
34 Chalk Farm Rd
Camden
London
NW1 8AJ

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Dhananjay Somra

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 12 December 2020

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 6 April 2021

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

London School of Trends (LST/the Provider) is a privately owned organisation that has offered short courses in fashion and styling since its inception in December 2012.

LST, formerly known as JD Image Promotions Limited, was registered as London School of Trends Limited in the United Kingdom (UK) in June 2015. In May 2018, the registered company name was changed to the London School of Trendz Limited. The Provider offers internally awarded specialist training in fashion and design.

LST is based in an arts centre hub with teaching and recreational facilities in Chalk Farm in north London. Rooms in the on-site accommodation block are also licensed by the Provider from the same facilities management company.

LST's aim is to provide a programme of short residential courses in arts subjects to international participants.

The founder of LST, who is also the Executive/Managing Director, is in charge of day-to-day operations. He is supported by two other Directors, the Director of Human Resources and Operations, and the Course Director.

2. Brief description of the current provision

LST offers five internally awarded, four-week courses in Fashion Styling, Interior Design and Styling, Luxury Brand Management, Visual Merchandising, and Fashion Marketing and Entrepreneurship. Residential and non-residential course options are available.

The courses include face-to-face delivery, time for research and timetabled visits to places of interest relevant to the fashion and design industry. The location for the visits includes the twice-yearly London Fashion Week and Decorex, which is an international interior design show that is held every October.

Participants receive a certificate of completion from LST when they complete a course.

Most of the participants on the courses are undergraduates and are studying on the first or second year of a degree course in India. The last two courses have been made up of groups of ten to 12 participants. The vast majority were female and all were aged in their early 20s and came from India. All participants are over the age of 18. At the time of the inspection, there were no participants enrolled.

Courses are advertised through the website, with enrolment dates from January 2021. The Provider has the capacity to run several courses at the same time. There are no specific entry requirements apart from having an interest in the subject and an International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score at a minimum of 6.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted remotely over one day by one inspector. The inspector held meetings with the Executive Director, the Director of Human Resources and Operations, and the Course Director. Documents and electronic records were scrutinised and remote interviews were undertaken with previous participants and a course trainer. A virtual tour of the premises and the residential accommodation was also carried out. The Provider co-operated fully with the inspection and any additional paperwork required was supplied promptly.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	30-31 October 2013
Interim	16 January 2015
Spot Check	1 February 2016
Re-accreditation	22-23 October 2018
Supplementary	3 February 2020

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

Since September 2020, the Provider has also offered a range of short online courses for international participants. The courses comprise three 35-week courses in Fashion, Fashion Design and Technology, and Interior Design. These were approved by Eduqual in September 2020 as customised qualifications under the Scottish Qualifications Framework (SCQF). They carry 120 credits at Level 4. This online provision does not currently form part of British Accreditation Council (BAC) accreditation.

2. Response to action points in last report

3.2 The experience and qualifications of staff must be accurately verified before employment.

Offers of employment now require receipt of two professional written references and copies of qualifications to be submitted in order to verify a candidate's experience and qualifications. This is documented in the staff handbook.

9.4 There must be a policy and procedure in place for the acquisition of academic resources.

The Provider reviews the inventory, library and resource requirements on an annual basis. The Course Director also has a budget to purchase appropriate resources. This procedure is documented in the staff handbook and is effective in ensuring that the resources needed for training are purchased quickly with no impact on participants.

17.7 The Provider must ensure staff receive formal training and a risk assessment is carried out with regard to protecting participants from radicalisation and extremism.

The Provider does not have a policy or risk assessment relating to preventing radicalisation and extremism. A small minority of training staff have completed relevant training.

19.2 The complaints policy must include provision for resolution of the complaint through a process which includes consideration by an external independent adjudicator.

The complaints policy includes details about the complaints process and the requirement for an independent external adjudicator to be appointed, to ensure a consistent and fair approach to any decisions made.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that the admissions policy is updated to reflect the requirements relating to possible future participants, as it is planned to market the courses more widely to prospective participants from countries in addition to India.

There is no formal admissions process, which means there is no consistent approach to the recruitment of prospective participants from countries in addition to India.

It is recommended that the process for obtaining and analysing feedback from staff and participants is reviewed to include updating the feedback form and improving the action-planning process.

Participants complete feedback questionnaires at the end of their course. These are reviewed quarterly to ensure a consistent level of participant satisfaction. Staff have regular meetings and opportunities to provide feedback to the management team. Feedback is used to develop effective action plans to improve the provision and delivery of courses.

It is recommended that risk assessments are carried out on all off-site social activities organised by the Provider to ensure the safety of the participants.

The Provider has developed a suitable risk assessment form for off-site social activities. However, no risk assessments have yet been carried out.

It is recommended that the Provider hires dedicated office space at its teaching site for administration should provision expand further.

The Provider has dedicated office space that can be used by staff for administrative purposes, although this is not at the main teaching delivery site. Additional office space can be booked at the delivery venue as and when required.

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 effectively managed and has a clear organisational structure. The senior managers are appropriately qualified in management, administration and education, and all have a background in creative arts. Job descriptions set out the main duties of the role and the desired level of previous experience. All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. However, the job descriptions for the Directors have insufficient information about their responsibilities, such as their line management responsibilities.

The administrator has a clearly defined role in supporting the management team and the welfare of participants. This is effective and sufficient for the current size of the Provider.

The Provider has an excellent website, which provides prospective participants with an accurate overview of the courses and their structure and entry requirements. The branding of the associated documentation and marketing materials is very well designed. The information provides participants with an accurate depiction of the provision, and appropriate information about the courses to make an informed decision about which course to study.

The Provider takes reasonable care to recruit suitable participants for its courses. The participants are recruited in their home country, where they are studying a related degree course, through the International Institute of Fashion Design (INIFD), which acts as a recruitment agency. However, there is no formal admissions process. As a result, there is no consistent approach to participant recruitment if other recruitment organisations want to put forward prospective participants or individual people want to apply.

A suitable attendance policy provides details of the effective procedures for managing course attendance. A register is taken daily to monitor participant attendance and any absences are promptly followed up by the administrator. This helps to identify any potential problems and to provide support to participants where necessary. The courses are intensive programmes and include interesting supervised visits related to the subject. As a result, attendance levels are excellent.

Participants complete a feedback questionnaire at the end of their course. The resulting feedback is collated for each course and all comments are regularly analysed by the management team. Improvements to the provision have been made where possible in order to maintain high standards and a high level of participant satisfaction. There is no mechanism for reporting any improvement actions taken by the Provider to the individual participants.

The Executive Director is responsible for monitoring and periodically reviewing the performance of the Provider. Performance is appropriately reviewed in line with the relevant policies and includes action planning in response to participant and staff feedback to ensure the continuous improvement of the provision.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

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

Comments

The Course Director effectively manages the programmes and the training team. Programme management is robust and an effective timetable is used to allocate classrooms, resources and trainers for each course.

Course delivery is effective. It includes a series of lectures, demonstrations and supervised workshops. Participants undertake weekly assignments, which are submitted electronically. The assignments focus on the production of a final presentation which simulates actual practice in the sector. This practical approach is very effective in encouraging participants to develop their skills.

A Resident Mentor, who is a member of the INIFD's staff, is present during all the teaching sessions, and can interpret for participants where necessary. The Resident Mentor also gives the participants appropriate daily tutorial support.

LST is provided with background information from INIFD for all the participants. This information is used effectively by the trainers to assess the participant's level of study and any learning needs prior to arrival and helps them to prepare effective delivery methods to suit individual participant needs.

The trainers are all university lecturers and specialists in their respective subjects. They are highly qualified and experienced in the creative arts. Regular classroom observations are conducted to ensure a consistently high level of delivery to all participants. In addition, useful feedback is provided to the trainers after each course based on the feedback from the participants.

During the training sessions, the trainers continually check learning and are available for additional support if required. The information and support provided to participants ensure participants are well informed and feel supported throughout their course.

Formal assessments take place at the end of the course and lead to the final award and certificate. Written constructive feedback is normally provided within a few days of an assignment being submitted. The feedback that is provided supports participants' progression well.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

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

Comments

Suitably qualified staff are responsible for the participants' welfare. These include the Director of Human Resources and Operations and the Resident Mentor. The Resident Mentor is from the same country as the current participants and is, therefore, a speaker of the participants' first language and understands the culture of the participants. This provides participants with a known member of staff who understands their specific support needs.

The participants and their parents receive appropriate information on all aspects of the provision, including information about the course, location, tutors, key contacts and a detailed guide to London and local customs to help international participants settle in to their surroundings.

Additional advice and guidance are given in India prior to enrolment. In addition to this, INIFD also obtain information about the participants' background, specific dietary requirements and their religious beliefs so

they can inform the Provider before the course starts. Participants are also provided with joining instructions. These include course information, schedules, handbooks and log in details for the online portal to access course materials and resources.

The induction process is delivered on the first day of training and is very thorough. The content is appropriate and includes details of the course content, structure, assessments, relevant policies and general health and safety. As a result, the participants understand the requirements of the course and what is expected of them.

17.7 A policy to address the risks of radicalisation and extremism and a supporting risk assessment have not been developed. Not all staff have completed appropriate training.

A complaints procedure is issued to participants with the joining instructions. The policy is also covered as part of the induction process. This includes the LST's complaints process and details of how participants can also contact BAC to raise a complaint if required.

The residential accommodation is clean, bright and modern. Health and safety notices, signage and fire escapes are clearly displayed. The reception area is fully staffed to ensure appropriate security and a first aider is always available on site to ensure a safe environment for participants.

The Provider organises an extensive programme of social activities and supervised trips for participants. Day trips are normally course related and may be task based to help generate design ideas and inspire project work. Evening activities include visits to well-known local attractions, restaurants and a tour of London. All activities are included in the course fee and are appropriately supervised. Risk assessments for off-site visits are not carried out.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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

Comments

The Provider has secure agreements for the use of its premises and can hire classrooms, meetings rooms and additional accommodation with the managed service provider when required.

The premises are accessed by a main door that leads into a reception area which is staffed at all time to ensure the security of the premises. The interior is clean, bright and stylishly furnished and decorated.

The classrooms feature natural light, a television, a large desk space and comfortable seating for participants. A large library is also stocked with relevant course related books which participants can borrow and take back to their accommodation. Additional subject specific resources and equipment are hired to facilitate the effective running of the design workshops and fashion projects.

Health and safety notices are clearly displayed, and each floor has clean toilet facilities, a small kitchen area and a space to eat and relax. A lockable storage space is also available for the secure storage of equipment or participants' belongings.

Overall, the premises support the effective delivery of the courses very well.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The trainers are highly experienced professionals with extensive teaching experience and they provide participants with a high level of subject knowledge related to industry practice.

The supervised activities and social events are varied and frequent and provide the participants with good opportunities to experience London and its associated attractions and venues.

The delivery venue and accommodation are of a high standard.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

A suitable formal admissions policy must be developed.	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
The Provider must introduce a mechanism for reporting to the participants on any changes or actions taken in response to their feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
17.7 The Provider must put in place appropriate arrangements to prevent radicalisation and extremism.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

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

Risk assessments should be carried out for all off-site social activities organised by the Provider.

It is recommended that the Provider develops the job descriptions for the directors to ensure they include clear areas of line management responsibility.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

There are qualified first aiders in the building used for course delivery and accommodation. However, none of LST's staff has a current first aid qualification which could inhibit a speedy response in the case of an emergency.