



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

INSTITUTION:	Leiths School of Food and Wine
ADDRESS:	16–20 Wendell Road London W12 9RT
HEAD OF INSTITUTION:	Ms Camilla Schneideman
ACCREDITATION STATUS:	Accredited
DATE OF INSPECTION:	25 February 2021
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:	Continued accreditation, 27 May 2021

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Leiths School of Food and Wine (Leiths/the Institution) is a private limited company operating as a further education college in west London. It offers amateur and professional cooking courses.

Leiths' mission is to provide students with the skills, knowledge and confidence to develop a lifelong love of food.

The Institution was established in 1975 by the chef Prue Leith and Caroline Waldegrave in order to train chefs for the expanding catering enterprise that Prue Leith had begun in 1969. The current sole proprietor assumed ownership in 2017. The Institution is governed by a Board, which meets four times a year. Its members include the Managing Director, two members of the proprietor's family and one of the founders of the Institution. The Principal is the Academic Manager and she is supported by two Head Teachers.

Since the last inspection, Leiths has introduced a number of new courses, which have been developed based on existing courses. A new Chair of the Board has been appointed, and additional premises have been purchased in the vicinity of the main premises in west London.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The main programme offered is a two- or three-term professional Diploma in Food and Wine, which is usually delivered face to face. Students taking this course are also enrolled for the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH) Level 4 Diploma in Professional Culinary Arts. A Foundation Certificate for committed amateurs and potential professionals is also offered over one term.

In addition, the Institution runs a range of professional courses in the evenings or part time during the day over 10 weeks, including Nutrition in Culinary Practice, Essential Cookery Certificate, Chef Skills and Chef Skills Patisserie Certificate. These courses lead to Leiths' awards.

Amateur chef courses run from half a day to one week and start throughout the year. Outside term time, teenage amateur courses are offered to those wanting to learn the basics of cookery.

Leiths has developed close links with top restaurants, food magazines and food businesses. This enables students to benefit from internships and job opportunities.

At the time of the inspection, there were 63 students enrolled full time on the Diploma course and five on the Intermediate Certificate course, all attending remotely. There was no core curriculum being delivered because of national regulations preventing students from attending face-to-face classes. Instead, courses separate from, but related to, the core curriculum were being delivered. The curriculum will be made up once the students go into the Institution again.

The majority of the students are from the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU), but students attend Leiths from the following countries: America, Canada, Russia, Turkey, Ireland, Germany and Italy. The majority are over the age of 18 years. The majority of Diploma students are in their 20s and 30s and there are more female students than male.

There are no entry qualifications for the courses, but an in-depth interview takes place for those wanting to take the Diploma course. Enrolment for this course is at the beginning of the academic year, and for other courses at different points in the year, at times publicised on the website. A small minority of students speak English as an additional language. If enrolled on the Diploma course, they need to have an appropriate level of English based on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).

3. Inspection process

The inspection was undertaken remotely by one inspector over two half-days. The inspector scrutinised documentation and videos of different types of classes and had online meetings with senior managers, teachers, students and class representatives. It was not possible to inspect the premises during this inspection as they were closed. The staff co-operated fully with the inspector throughout the inspection.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	22 January 2002
Interim	4 November 2005
Re-accreditation	12 June 2007
Supplementary	5 February 2008
Interim	2 September 2009
Re-accreditation	10–11 February 2011
Interim	22 March 2013
Re-accreditation	16–17 March 2015
Interim	5 January 2017
Re-accreditation	14–15 May 2019

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

New courses have been developed a Plant-Based Essential Cookery course, a Chef Skills course, which runs in the evenings or over four weeks in the summer, and an Amateur Patisserie course. The pre-existing Essential Cookery course has also been released in different formats to provide flexibility for different demographics.

Specialist equipment has been installed to allow for the live streaming of demonstration lessons and the filming of skills classes. These are available for students to watch in their own time, if necessary, particularly if they have missed a class.

The Institution has purchased premises near to the main premises. These consist of two offices, a meeting room and a filming kitchen. The latter can be rented out to external organisations.

A further change has been that the Chair of the Board, who is the Institution's proprietor, has stepped down from the Board and has handed over to a new Chair. Two new Head Teachers have been promoted to facilitate more effective communications and to support the Principal in carrying out her duties.

2. Response to action points in last report

2.5 The School must introduce a management information system that allows for effective systems to support the collection and collation of data.

The previous system has been replaced with an interim bespoke system which is based on different technology platforms. This continues to be modified to better suit the needs of the Institution. The system in use is not yet sufficiently efficient. Further work is necessary to ensure that the management information system developed supports the collection and collation of all data effectively.

7.2 All feedback must be consistently and regularly analysed to promote improvements in the provision.

At the end of each term, feedback from students is reviewed and actions to be taken are noted. From this, senior teachers develop an action plan, which provides a clear structure to support improvements.

8.2 Reports must be compiled to include an analysis of year-on-year data and the results of different areas of the provision to support quality improvement.

This has not yet been undertaken as the management information system is still being developed to support bringing together data from all areas of the provision.

8.3 Action-planning must be undertaken consistently across the provision to limit missed opportunities for improvement.

Action points are identified in connection with student feedback. However, formalised action-planning has not been undertaken consistently across the provision, so reducing opportunities for improvement.

11.3 Lesson observations must be included as part of the appraisal process to support ongoing quality in teaching and learning.

Lesson observations take place as part of the system to promote staff internally. A new appraisal system has been developed and will draw on a new lesson observation template that has been developed. Teachers have observed a video of a model class. The appraisal process has not yet been implemented.

18.6 Safeguarding arrangements must be amended to include a record of the numbers of staff DBS certificates in the Single Central Record and the provision of information for the parents or guardians of those under the age of 18 about the levels of support provided.

Numbers of DBS certificates are included in the Single Central Record. There is good provision of information for the parents or guardians of those students under the age of 18 about the levels of support provided by the Institution.

18.7 Effective arrangements must be put in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

An effective risk assessment has been carried out and a suitable policy has been put in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. All staff undertake related online training.

20.3 Students must be advised of BAC's complaints procedure.

Information on BAC's complaints procedure is included in information on the website and in the student handbook, providing clear information for students.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that the international student handbook is reviewed to include more helpful information.

There has been no recruitment of international students in recent months. Consequently, the handbook has yet to be updated. The student handbook given to all students has been reviewed. New information, such as more detail on policies and procedures, has been included to make it more helpful.

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 management structure is clearly defined and understood. The role and extent of the authority of the proprietor are well understood and all staff are appropriately qualified.

The Board meets four times a year to support and direct the ongoing success of the Institution. It works closely with senior managers, who use their monthly meetings to communicate strategic messages. Communications with management and staff are highly effective and are predominantly based on weekly meetings of the different teams. These keep the administrative and teaching staff well briefed on all aspects of the provision.

Staff receive news on updates electronically as necessary, often to refresh memories about issues such as policies and health and safety. An annual all-staff meeting allows the Managing Director to convey key messages for the year, thus keeping everyone up to date with developments.

Policies are regularly updated and this task has recently been undertaken. A highly useful document indicates the next review date of the many policies in place, and who is responsible, in order to ensure the ongoing relevance of the policies.

2.5 The current data-collection system does not sufficiently support the effective collection and collation of data.

The website is easy to navigate. Information provided is comprehensive and gives a detailed description of each course. A high-quality video allows prospective students to see the different types of dishes they will learn to prepare on the different courses, as well as to see the facilities at Leiths. The information allows students to make appropriate choices of course.

There are no entry requirements for the courses. The information specifies who would benefit from the course. Those wishing to enrol on the Diploma course have an interview to ensure that they are well matched to the course. For those students who speak English as an additional language, there is a required level of English proficiency based on an appropriate IELTS score. These measures are appropriate in terms of allowing those who enrol to succeed on their courses.

In addition to an end-of-course feedback questionnaire for students, class representatives provide feedback to senior managers. Prompt action is taken to address any issues. Class representatives feed back management's responses to their classes. Notes of the meetings between managers and class representatives are produced, but not circulated to the students, so missing out on an opportunity to keep the student body better informed.

8.2 As a result of the limitations of the technology being used centrally as part of the management information system, the Institution has difficulty in consistently producing reports that include an effective analysis of the data relating to different elements of the provision, so reducing the possibilities for making improvements.

Actions to be taken arising from student feedback are the starting point for senior teacher meetings. The Principal reports these to the Board effectively four times a year.

8.3 While action points are identified, formalised action-planning has not been undertaken consistently across the provision, so reducing opportunities for quality enhancement.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Principal leads the academic side of the provision. She is effectively supported by two Head Teachers. They have all had careers in the industry and have relevant qualifications and experience, so supporting standards of excellence.

Live streaming of demonstration classes is effective in supporting learning as students have access at any time to the classes, so allowing them to work at their own pace.

Teachers have daily meetings to discuss the focus of classes, so promoting a consistent learning experience.

All courses, including the new courses, are designed by staff at Leiths, who are industry specialists. This is highly effective in supporting students to develop relevant knowledge and skills.

As there is currently no core curriculum being delivered due to national regulations, students, individually or in small groups, have decided to develop external activities focusing on the food sector, with the help of their teachers if necessary. This has allowed them to develop a range of new skills, including independent learning skills.

Teachers are highly skilled professionals within the sector, which allows them to deliver the content of their courses effectively.

An excellent appraisal system is outlined in the staff appraisal guide. The process for appraising staff has yet to be completed for the past year. Lesson observations now form part of appraisal for teachers.

11.3 It is not possible to comment on the effectiveness of the appraisal system as it has not yet been implemented, including for the online classes.

Students receive feedback on the dishes they have prepared on a daily basis. At the end of a class, the senior teacher tastes each dish, gives a mark and provides comments. A formal meeting with the class teacher takes place in the middle of the course, when an update on progress is given. If the student is unlikely to succeed, an alternative course is offered. Consequently, students are kept fully informed about the progress they are making and the likelihood of their success on the course.

Students have a tutor, who is in weekly contact with them. In the meetings with students and class representatives, they commented on the helpfulness and high levels of support and flexibility offered by their tutors. This helps promote success. The inspection findings confirm this view.

Leiths List is the employment and advice arm of the Institution, with whom students are able to discuss their future work plans. In the student meeting, students reported that they would like to have more contact with Leiths List in order to strengthen their chances of employment.

4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

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

Comments

Every student has a class tutor, who provides welfare support. The Principal also has a welfare role and is known to all students. Teachers have undertaken mental health awareness training. Consequently, good levels of support are provided.

All staff have undertaken a course related to radicalisation and extremism to support their understanding. An appropriate risk assessment and policy are in place.

Before starting their course, students are sent the student handbook, which is detailed and informative. As a result, students are well briefed on different aspects of their course and of the Institution, including a fair complaints procedure and information on BAC's complaints procedure.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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

Comments

The main premises were not viewed as they were closed at the time of the inspection. They were previously inspected and found to meet the standards in the inspection framework. The Institution confirmed that no significant changes had taken place since the last inspection.

Since the introduction of live streaming and demonstration classes, which can take place in different rooms, students have significantly more space at their disposal. This makes for a more comfortable experience, which was commented on in student feedback.

A small suite of local premises, providing extra office space, a meeting room and a filming studio, has been purchased. It was not possible to inspect these premises and they will be reviewed at the next inspection.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Excellent communications between management, staff and students ensures that all stakeholders are kept up to date on all developments.

The approachability and flexibility of staff ensures that high levels of support are provided to students.

The highly specialised teaching staff are extremely knowledgeable, so supporting quality in the delivery of classes.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

2.5 The School must introduce a management information system that allows for effective systems to support the collection and collation of data.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
8.2 Reports must be compiled to include an analysis of year-on-year data and the results of different areas of the provision to support quality improvement.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
8.3 Action-planning must be undertaken consistently across the provision to limit missed opportunities for improvement.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
11.3 Lesson observations must be included as part of the appraisal process to support ongoing quality in teaching and learning.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

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

It is recommended that notes of meetings between managers and class representatives are made available to students to keep them better informed.

It is suggested that increased contact between students and Leiths List is developed in order to strengthen students' chances of employment.

It is recommended that the international student handbook is reviewed to include more helpful information.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE