

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

College Reaccreditation Inspection

INSTITUTION: Lavender International NDT Consultancy Services

ADDRESS: Unit 7
Penistone Station
Penistone
Sheffield
S36 6HP

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr Tim Armitt

DATE OF INSPECTION: 30-31 May 2017

ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION: Accredited

DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:

- Reaccreditation to be awarded for the full four-year period.
- Decision on accreditation deferred.
- Accreditation to be withdrawn.

Date: 27 July 2017

1. Background to the institution

Lavender International NDT Consultancy Services Limited (Lavender International/the College) is a Non-Destructive Testing (NDT) training provider. It offers specialist accredited courses and examination services for engineering-related industries. Its clients include major aerospace companies, oil and gas suppliers, the nuclear industry and engineering companies, which are based in the United Kingdom (UK) and overseas.

The company's headquarters and main training centre are located in Penistone, near Barnsley, South Yorkshire and a second centre is based in the Technology Centre at the Advanced Manufacturing Park in Rotherham, South Yorkshire.

The training centres are approved by the British Institute for Non-Destructive Testing (BINDT). They are authorised by BINDT as Personnel Certification in Non Destructive Testing (PCN) examination centres. In addition, the company is a BINDT Approved Outside Agency, which is recognised by the UK National Aerospace NDT Board.

The College was founded as a partnership in 1976. It has been set up as a limited company since 1984. In April 2015, the company became employee-owned, while retaining its limited company status. An employee-ownership trust (EOT) was established to look after the long-term benefits of all employees. Since the interim inspection in 2015, the company has appointed a new Managing Director and a board of trustees.

Lavender International continues to offer an extensive range of short courses, between one and 15 days long.

Since the last inspection, the company has entered into a strategic partnership with Barnsley College to deliver two NDT apprenticeships. These have been developed by BINDT in co-operation with several employers in the NDT industry, in order to encourage engineering companies to take on new staff and to encourage school-leavers to embark on a career in NDT.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The College offers a full programme of courses and re-certification examinations in various NDT disciplines throughout the year. Only a small selection of these programmes were running at the time of the inspection.

All short courses are delivered on a face-to-face basis. They can be run at short notice if there is sufficient demand. Subjects offered include Magnetic Testing, Penetrant Testing, Radiography Testing, Radiation Protection Safety, Eddy Current Testing, Material Evaluation, Ultrasonic Testing, Phased Array and Time of Flight Diffraction. The NDT Operator Apprenticeship is a Level 2 apprenticeship, typically achieved in 18 months. The NDT Engineering Technician Apprenticeship is a Level 3 apprenticeship, which is offered over 36 months.

At the time of the inspection, there were three full-time students and six part-time students enrolled on courses or taking re-certification examinations. The number of enrolments in 2016 across all courses and re-certification examinations was over 2,000. All students are over the age of 18 and the majority are male. The majority of students are from the UK. Other European Union countries represented include the Republic of Ireland.

The College is a signatory to the Diversity in Engineering Concordat, which is an initiative led by the Royal Academy of Engineering and funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. It is designed to improve diversity in the engineering profession.

The College offers additional NDT training and examination services in Humble, Texas and in Perth, Australia, and has interests in Canada, Greece and South Africa. However, the British Accreditation Council (BAC) only accredits the UK provision.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted over two days by one inspector. Meetings were held with directors, senior managers, tutors and students. Site visits and observations of teaching and learning were conducted at the training sites in Penistone and Rotherham. A wide range of documentation was reviewed before and during the inspection. There was excellent cooperation by all staff throughout the inspection process.

4. Inspection history:

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	19-19 May 2009
Interim	16 June 2010
Re-accreditation	22-23 April 2013
Interim	17 July 2015

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 institution.

INSPECTION AREA - MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

1. The institution 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. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.2 | The head of the institution and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.3 | There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

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

Comments

All staff were highly supportive of the decision to become employee-owned. As a result, there is a clear ethos and sense of ownership of the business and its clients. However, the roles and responsibilities of the new EOT are not yet fully understood by all members of staff.

The board of trustees does not currently include an independent director.

2. The administration of the institution is effective

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 2.1 | Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.2 | The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.3 | The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.4 | Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.5 | Data collection and collation systems are effective. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

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

Comments

Administrators are well qualified and experienced and carry out their responsibilities effectively.

3. **The institution 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. Yes No
- 3.2 Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment. Yes No
- 3.3 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff. Yes No

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

Comments

4. **Publicity material, both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the institution and its curriculum**

- 4.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered. Yes No
- 4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. Yes No

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

Comments

Since the last inspection, the College has added a new business development team to its structure. This has given more prominence to the role of marketing across the business and has improved the quality of the website and publicity material.

5. **The institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable students for its courses**

- 5.1 Entry requirements for each course are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective students. Yes No
- 5.2 A formal application process ensures that students meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified. Yes No
- 5.3 Students are properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses for which they apply, and all application enquiries responded to promptly and appropriately. Yes No
- 5.4 Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated. Yes No NA
- 5.5 Students receive a proper initial assessment which includes language ability to confirm their capability to complete the courses on which they are enrolling. Yes No

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

Comments

Student recruitment procedures are effective in ensuring that students are suitable for the course, on which they are enrolled.

6. **There is an appropriate policy on student attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it**

- 6.1 There is a clear and published policy on student attendance and punctuality, requiring that they attend at least 80% of their scheduled classes. Yes No NA
- 6.2 Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all students, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly. Yes No NA
- 6.3 Student absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken. Yes No NA

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

Comments

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

- 7.1 The institution has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner institutions and employers) on all aspects of the institution's provision, including formal student 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 institution's response to the feedback to the student body. Yes No

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

Comments

The College has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders. However, most discussions with employers are conducted on an informal basis.

8. **The institution 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 institution's performance. Yes No
- 8.2 Reports are compiled at least annually which present the results of the institution's reviews and incorporate action plans. Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates. Yes No
- 8.3 Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to the management. Yes No

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

Comments

Monitoring and reviewing of standards and performance is exemplary. Quality assurance is detailed, thorough and systematic and includes a comprehensive overview of all aspects of course management and delivery by external auditors.

INSPECTION AREA - TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

9. Academic management is effective

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 9.1 | There is a suitably qualified and experienced academic manager or academic management team with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.2 | Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.3 | The allocation of teachers to classes provides for a consistent learning experience. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.4 | There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures for the acquisition of academic resources. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

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

Comments

Courses are well-managed by a highly qualified and experienced academic management team.

10. The courses are planned and delivered in ways that enable students to succeed

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 10.1 | Courses are designed and delivered in ways that allow students to develop the knowledge and skills which will be required for final examinations or assessments. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.2 | Lessons and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.3 | Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.4 | Students are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.5 | Full-time courses requiring students to attend for 15 hours or more per week are time tabled over at least three days. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.6 | Any required coursework and revision periods are scheduled in advance. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.7 | The academic backgrounds and particular needs of students are taken into account in the classroom delivery of the course. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

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

Comments

A consistent standard of teaching, learning and assessment is achieved across a wide range of specialist courses.

All courses are delivered in accordance with the specific requirements of BINDT, which is the company's main awarding body.

The academic backgrounds and skills levels of students are effectively taken into account in the classroom delivery.

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

- 11.1 Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Yes No
- 11.2 Teachers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skill which allows them to deliver the content of courses effectively. Yes No
- 11.3 The appraisal procedures for teaching staff incorporate regular classroom observation. Yes No
- 11.4 Teachers are supported in their continuing professional development and enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the learning of students. Yes No
- 11.5 Teachers respond to different learning needs of students where appropriate, taking various learning styles into account in their planning and delivery of lessons. Yes No
- 11.6 Teachers employ effective strategies to involve all students in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content. Yes No

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

Comments

Although the appraisal procedures for teaching staff incorporate regular classroom observation, there is no additional mechanism for the use of peer observation as a way of disseminating good teaching practice.

12. **The institution provides students and teachers with access to appropriate resources and materials for study**

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

Comments

The College has assembled a substantial collection of up-to-date samples, test pieces and specialist equipment to enable students to develop their practical skills and complete technical tasks as part of the course or re-accreditation examination. As a result, students are able to make good progress and develop high-level skills relevant to their workplace environment.

13. **Students receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, which are effectively monitored**

- 13.1 Courses are planned to include a schedule of assessments, the procedures and criteria for which are available in writing and in advance to students and teachers. Yes No
- 13.2 Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of students who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate. Yes No
- 13.3 Students are made aware of how their progress relates to their targeted level of achievement. Yes No
- 13.4 The institution takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating and other misdemeanours, and to penalise offenders. Yes No
- 13.5 Additional support or advice on alternative courses is provided to students who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed. Yes No
- 13.6 Oral and written feedback is given to individual students on a regular basis, tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery. Yes No
- 13.7 Students have appropriate access outside class time to teachers or personal tutors for academic support. Yes No

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

Comments

Students on all courses receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress. This includes a set of daily training assessments, with additional support provided where necessary.

14. **The institution offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies wherever appropriate**

- 14.1 For courses leading to the award of a UK degree, the institution has a formal agreement with a recognised UK degree-awarding body. Yes No NA
- 14.2 For courses leading to other UK awards, the awarding body is recognised by the relevant regulator. Yes No NA
- 14.3 For courses leading to the award of an overseas degree, the institution has a formal partnership agreement with the overseas degree-awarding body, which is itself accredited by a recognised national agency. Yes No NA

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**

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

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**

- 16.1 The institution complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration. Yes No NA
- 16.2 For internal awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration, and clear procedures for students to appeal against their marks. Yes No NA

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

Comments _____

17. **There is appropriate provision of advice for students intending to proceed to employment or higher/further education**

- 17.1 Students have access to advice from appropriate staff member on further study and career opportunities. Yes No
- 17.2 If the institution offers courses preparing students for higher education, they have access to prospectuses and to advice from a designated staff member both on selecting courses and institutions and on the application process. Yes No NA

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

Comments _____

INSPECTION AREA - STUDENT WELFARE

18. Students receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances

- 18.1 There is at least one named staff member responsible for student welfare who is suitably trained, accessible to all students and available to provide advice and counselling. Yes No
- 18.2 Students receive appropriate advice before arrival. Yes No
- 18.3 Students receive an appropriate induction and relevant information upon arrival. Yes No
- 18.4 Students are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support. Yes No
- 18.5 The institution has policies in place to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour. Yes No
- 18.6 Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place and are regularly reviewed to keep all students safe. Yes No NA
- 18.7 Effective arrangements are in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Yes No

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

Comments

There are currently no students under the age of 18. However, the necessary arrangements have been put in place in the event that any students under the age of 18 enrol onto the new apprenticeship programmes in the future.

19. International students are provided with specific advice and assistance

- 19.1 International students receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and staying in the UK. Yes No
- 19.2 International students receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area. Yes No
- 19.3 Information and advice specific to international students continues to be available throughout the course of study. Yes No
- 19.4 Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations. Where possible, students have access to speakers of their own first language. Yes No

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

Comments

20. **The fair treatment of students is ensured**

- 20.1 Students apply for and are enrolled on courses under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions. Yes No
- 20.2 Students have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course. Yes No
- 20.3 Students are advised of BAC's own complaints procedure. Yes No

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

Comments _____

21. **Where residential accommodation is offered, it is fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised**

- 21.1 Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to the needs of students. Yes No
- 21.2 Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted where students under 18 are accommodated. Yes No NA
- 21.3 Clear rules and fire, health and safety procedures are in place, with appropriate precautions taken for security of students and their property. Yes No
- 21.4 A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of students. Yes No
- 21.5 Separate accommodation blocks are provided for students under 18. Yes No NA

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

Comments _____

22. **Where home-stay accommodation is organised, the welfare of students is ensured and the institution's relationship with hosts is properly managed**

- 22.1 Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation which both provides a safe and comfortable living environment for students and is appropriately located for travel to the institution and back. Yes No
- 22.2 Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before students are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the institution. Yes No
- 22.3 The institution has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision. Yes No
- 22.4 Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and students before and during the placement. Yes No
- 22.5 Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for student 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 _____

23. **The institution provides an appropriate social programme for students and information on leisure activities in the area**

- 23.1 Students are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation at events and other leisure activities which may be of interest. Yes No
- 23.2 The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of students. Yes No NA
- 23.3 Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability by the majority of students. Yes No NA
- 23.4 Any activities organised by the institution 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

24. The institution has secure possession of and access to its premises

24.1 The institution has secure tenure on its premises. Yes No NA

24.2 Where required, the institution has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature. Yes No NA

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

Comments

25. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff

25.1 Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured. Yes No

25.2 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness. Yes No

25.3 There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories), made readily available to students, staff and visitors. Yes No NA

25.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to students, staff and visitors. Yes No

25.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information. Yes No

25.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of students and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors. Yes No

25.7 There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness. Yes No

25.8 There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms. Yes No

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

Comments

All classrooms and workshops provide a safe, secure and supportive working environment for students and staff.

26. Classrooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered

- 26.1 Classrooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them. Yes No
- 26.2 Classrooms 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
- 26.3 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

The training centres are equipped to an appropriate level. They provide suitable accommodation for the short courses and re-accreditation examinations, which are currently offered.

27. There are appropriate additional facilities for students and staff

- 27.1 Students have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private study, including library and IT resources. Yes No
- 27.2 Teaching staff have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation. Yes No
- 27.3 Students and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate. Yes No NA
- 27.4 Students and staff have access to storage for personal possessions where appropriate. Yes No NA
- 27.5 There are individual offices or rooms in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings. Yes No
- 27.6 Administrative offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the institution. Yes No

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

Comments

The Technology Centre at the Advanced Manufacturing Park in Rotherham provides a high standard of accommodation. It includes modern offices, meeting rooms and spacious facilities for work, private study, relaxation and refreshment.

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

Institution's strengths

Systems to review standards and assess performance are detailed, thorough and systematic. As a result, all aspects of the business are regularly reviewed and there is a strong focus on continuous improvement in teaching and learning

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Institution's strengths

The College invests considerable time and effort in maintaining and expanding a large inventory of up-to-date samples and test pieces. As a result, students are able to develop their practical skills to a very high industry standard.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

STUDENT WELFARE

Institution's strengths

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

PREMISES AND FACILITIES

Institution's strengths

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

It is recommended that the College takes steps to ensure that all employees fully understand the roles and responsibilities of the employee ownership trust (EOT).

The College should consider the appointment of an independent director, from outside the organisation, to the board of trustees.

The plans to introduce more formal employer questionnaires, in order to improve the quality of feedback from sponsoring

organisations, should be fully implemented.

It is recommended that the College introduces a peer observation scheme to facilitate the sharing of good practice across all the programmes and between the two training sites.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS