



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM VISIT (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: London College of Style

ADDRESS: Suite 3
4-6 High Street
Windsor
SL4 1LD

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Ms Wendy Elsmore

DATE OF INSPECTION: 30 May 2018

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 19 July 2018

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

London College of Style (LCS/the Provider) was established in 2010 in London and is a private limited company. Oversight and management are undertaken by the two directors. LCS aims to provide an alternative to traditional creative education. Teaching commenced in 2011 and the courses are for newcomers as well as those already working in the fashion sector. LCS teaching premises are located in West London positioned to serve the centre of the international fashion industry and the head office is in the centre of Windsor.

The provision focuses on personal styling, marketing and customer service specifically for the fashion industry. Since their last inspection, the Provider has won a contract to deliver bespoke training for a major high street retailer. The growth in the scale of the operation has provided an opportunity to separate the academic functions from the administrative aspects and that is why they are now based in two separate locations.

The head office function is controlled by the Managing Director and the Director of Education has oversight of the provision delivery and is supported by a team of course leaders.

All teaching takes place in the Provider's West London base or within a host company's premises. Course content includes practical activities and individual projects alongside personalised feedback given directly to the participant. Bespoke seminars and short courses provide opportunities for participants to explore style factors and achieve their own personal and career aspirations.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Provider offers nine courses of varying durations. These are a three month Fashion and Personal Styling Foundation Diploma which runs three times a year; a 12-week Editorial Styling Advanced Diploma which runs three times each year; a 12 week E-Learning Fashion and Personal Styling Foundation Diploma; a one week Personal Styling Diploma which runs six times each year; a six month Combined Study programme: Foundation and Advanced Diploma; a one week Fashion Styling Summer course; a one day Personal Styling course; a one day Business Masterclass; a one day Fashion Styling Masterclass and a one day Colour Analysis Masterclass.

Courses run throughout the year with diploma programmes run on a semester basis. Workshops, short courses and bespoke personal stylist and customer service training are offered on demand. No formal qualifications are required for entry to the programmes. Diploma students complete an application process, which includes a personal interview.

LCS has grown the number of work-placement partnerships since the last inspection and it currently has 157 active industry partners. The majority of industry opportunities consist of one to five-day placements, with participants gaining experience across multiple clients and multiple areas of the fashion industry including stylists, fashion brands, designers, public relation companies, recording artists, management roles, production companies and commercial clients. All participants undertake work-placements with authentic industry experiences and approximately 160 placements are undertaken per year. Diploma courses offer internships, careers guidance and support to gain post-graduate employment.

All courses offer an internal award and those of more than one day's duration are modular in structure with continuous assessment throughout the course. Three and six-month courses incorporate an internship of between one week and three months duration. The Provider also provides an Expert Mentoring service aimed at both LCS graduates as well as industry personnel. Graduates qualify for membership of the LCS Stylist Club, which offers a programme of fashion related events and seminars.

There are currently 50 participants in total enrolled on the diploma courses. At the time of the inspection two diploma courses were running with 36 participants. These were the Foundation Fashion and Personal Styling Diploma and the Advanced Fashion Styling Diploma. There are also one-week training programmes offered which attract 12 participants each and run six times a year. The vast majority of students are female. However, since the last inspection, there has been a modest increase in the number of male participants. Participants range in age from 18 to 45 with the vast majority aged between 19 and 28 years. Approximately a quarter are from the United Kingdom with the rest coming from Asia, including Malaysia, Singapore, China, Japan and the European Union and India.

BAC accreditation is for the UK provision only.

3. Inspection visit process

One inspector visited the new head office premises in Windsor for half a day. Meetings took place with the Managing Director, Director of Education and a Course Leader. Documents provided were scrutinised including feedback from intern hosts and participants and the new premises were reviewed. The Provider responded promptly to all requests for information.

4. Inspection history

Full inspection:	21-22 March 2012
Interim:	25 March 2013
Re-accreditation inspection:	29 February - 1 March 2016

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments 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

The Provider has significantly grown since the last inspection and this has resulted in a clear demarcation between the training and administrative functions. Since 2016, a new management structure has been introduced, which provides the Directors with a clear overview of the academic and administrative functions. To support this change, a new Head Office has opened in Windsor within short commuting distance of the Provider's training centre in West London.

The new office space is in a shared business building in the centre of Windsor with monitored secure access. The office is accessed via a shared stairway and the Provider space is clearly signposted. The office is open plan with designated work areas with computers and office equipment. There is a separate meeting area and large work space that can be sectioned off for privacy. The premises are used for administration purposes only and not for teaching or training.

Since the summer of 2016, the Provider has been contracted to deliver bespoke training to a major high street retailer. The training is delivered in the retailer's own premises, in LCS's training venue and in external venues. This provision focuses on the retailer's customer service philosophy, developing staff knowledge and enthusiasm for the fashion industry alongside providing targeted continuing professional development. Teaching focuses on skills development and increasing subject knowledge. Assessment is continuous and personalised with each participant receiving face-to-face and written feedback.

The curriculum has been extended to meet the demands of the fashion industry and includes an e-learning portal that goes live in July 2018. There are new courses starting in September 2018. Current programmes and courses are not externally accredited. However, this is something the academic managers are interested in developing as the period of growth extends.

Another significant change is the securing of student finance via the Government Professional and Career Development Loans with effect from April 2018. The Provider's aim is to widen access to fashion industry training.

2 Response to action points in last report

7.1 End of course feedback must be obtained from trainers which will make a positive contribution to quality assurance processes currently being developed.

Regular course review meetings take place and comprehensive records are maintained. These meetings follow a prescribed agenda and result in effective information sharing as well as supporting quality improvement planning.

7.1 Feedback from internship hosts, currently obtained informally, must be obtained on a formal basis as a means of enhancing quality assurance.

LSC staff personally contact internship hosts by telephone or video calls for feedback that is used to support quality improvement as well as supporting effective work-placement development. The Provider ensures that feedback is recorded and reviewed providing quantitative as well as qualitative data that is shared across the Provider. This process is further enhanced by using participant feedback on their placements resulting in plenty of information on what constitutes a successful internship for both parties.

8.1 The Provider must develop a more formal and robust academic quality assurance cycle which places data on participant achievement at the centre of the programme for trainer employment and support, and which integrates course delivery with course improvement.

Due to the rate of growth, the Provider has successfully formalised quality assurance processes through an effective revised management structure that provides clarity of roles as well as clear lines of accountability. The regular course review meetings produce high quality teaching and learning information as well as feedback from employers offering work-placements. This wide-range of information is effectively used by managers to inform curriculum development as well as identifying continuing professional development opportunities for staff.

10.1 Priority must be given to LCS completing its current course document development programme, to ensure that information is more clearly presented, according to stakeholders' requirements.

All courses are supported by well-organised and informative course folders that contain all documentation relating to the programmes, including coherent lesson plans and information on appropriate resources. This information successfully supports stakeholders' requirements and the outcomes of the courses.

11.3 As a means of enhancing quality assurance the Provider must develop for publication in the staff handbook, a formal programme of trainer observation which is linked both to staff appraisal and the dissemination of good teaching practice.

The current staff handbook provides information on the purpose, practice and schedule of classroom observations as part of the quality assurance framework. Staff receive a hard copy of the handbook as well as having a copy in their personal cloud storage area. The appraisal process incorporates the findings from observed lessons and the course review meetings provide opportunities for staff to share ideas and good practice.

15.3 To enhance quality assurance the Provider must take steps to appoint an external moderator point.

The Provider has a job description for the role of external moderator and has advertised the role. The recruitment process is well underway.

24.6 The Provider must pursue further with the landlord of their West London teaching centre the matter of disabled access to the building taking specialist advice as necessary.

The accessibility issues at the teaching centre have been resolved. All teaching and learning opportunities and socialisation activities are undertaken on the ground floor where there is full accessibility.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that data streams, within online cloud document storage, separate streams related to general management from academic matters.

Cloud storage has been segregated by function, faculty, staff member and student. Areas are password protected and conform to current data protection regulations

It is recommended that selected content currently contained in the student handbook should also be included on the website.

Current students are given a copy of the student handbook via their own link on the LSC cloud storage. The website is undergoing a major update and will include the student handbook. The updated website is planned to go live in July 2018.

It is recommended that information related to the assessment procedures, already available in student handbooks is also included in staff handbooks.

A revised staff handbook is nearing completion and contains clear information on the policy and processes relating to assessments. This is scheduled to be circulated to staff in July 2018. In the interim, tutors have been given individualised folders relating to their programmes with the timetable and documentation for feedback and assessment protocols.

4 Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments The management structure provides the foundation for continued growth, providing control through clear lines of responsibility and accountability. Policies and procedures are effectively shared with all staff and the introduction of the course leader role is increasing the range and quality of information shared with freelance staff. Quality assurance processes effectively support robust self-assessment and quality improvement planning and are successfully contributing to the high standards achieved. The appointment of an external moderator will support the Provider and lead to opportunities to identify additional accreditation opportunities and/or support accreditation of the courses currently on offer.				

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be		✓		
Comments Course planning and delivery are meticulously managed and excellent records are maintained. Provision is highly individualised and effectively supports raising the aspirations of participants whilst meeting the needs of employers. Relationship management of all stakeholders is excellent. There are very high levels of satisfaction recorded. 15.3 The Provider has advertised the role of external moderator. The position has not yet been filled.				

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Information on the Provider's current and planned updated website regarding courses, seminars and workshops is comprehensive and includes a detailed online prospectus.				

The participant induction process is thorough and is supported by a comprehensive handbook.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments The use of external venues is secure and these venues are further supplemented by premises offered by partner organisations. The office environment is safe and secure. Health and safety information is clearly displayed.				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS
Bespoke curriculum responds promptly to the fashion and retail sectors' needs.
Provision is highly focused on the needs of participants and their personal and professional aspirations.

ACTIONS REQUIRED	Priority H/M/L
15.3 The Provider must confirm the appointment of an external moderator.	H

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
The Provider should identify accreditation pathways for courses if appropriate.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	
Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable	