

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

Online, Distance and Blended Learning (ODBL) Full Inspection

NAME OF PROVIDER: Online Education

ADDRESS: 4407/4 Daydream Street
Warriewood
New South Wales
2102
Australia

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Anthony Mondello

DATE OF INSPECTION: 9-11 April 2018

ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION: Unaccredited

DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:

- Accreditation awarded for the full three-year period
- Probation accreditation
- Decision on accreditation deferred
- Award of accreditation refused

DATE: 29 November 2018

1. Background to the provider

Online Education Proprietary Limited (the Provider) is a provider of online courses. Its base is located in Warriewood, which is a suburb in Northern Sydney, Australia. The Provider was founded and registered in 2006, as a proprietary limited company in Australia, by its present owner.

The first online course, which was offered was in interior design. This was firstly offered in the United States of America (USA) market and, subsequently, in the United Kingdom (UK) market with limited success. In 2007, promotion of the course in the home Australian market brought in more enrolments and the company began to expand its operation into New Zealand, Canada and South Africa. In late 2007, a second online course in photography was developed and marketed. In 2008, the Provider moved to larger premises and more staff were employed. With the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in 2008, the size of the Provider's activities grew rapidly. In 2014, the third course, an online art appreciation course, was launched.

Enrolments on the three courses have increased steadily and, currently, the Provider has 11,000 active learners, the majority being based in the English speaking countries of Australia, Canada, USA and the UK. With courses now being offered in eight other languages, enrolments in other countries are steadily rising.

The owner of the Provider works remotely for the greater part of the year and the day-to-day running of the operation is managed by the CEO and his team of 11 local part and full-time staff. Tutors and learner support staff are located in countries around the world.

The Provider makes use of serviced offices in 50 overseas locations. These provide a mail forwarding facility and serve to reassure online applicants that there is a local presence, although no Online Education staff are employed in these offices.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Online Education Proprietary Limited currently runs four online courses. These are Interior Design, Photography, Art Appreciation and Makeup Artistry. These courses are based on 12 modules, each of which can normally be completed in two weeks. The modules are downloaded by the learner and can be worked through at the learner's own pace. Assignments are set for each module and, after the first two modules, learners are required to submit and pass a module before they have access to the next module. The courses can be completed in about 24 weeks. However, learners may take up to one year to complete.

Learners who have completed their course can opt for an advanced module in their subject. These are single modules with a further assignment and offer the learner a chance to pursue a particular field of interest. The advanced modules are offered, for example, in wedding photography, photographing food and kitchen and bathroom design. Advanced modules for makeup artistry are in preparation.

During the week of the inspection, a new course in makeup artistry was launched. This was the result of a significant period of planning and investment, particularly in video content. A fifth course, based on nutrition, is being planned for next year. The organisation is looking to further extend the range of courses it provides and to offer further language versions.

Courses are currently offered in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Dutch and Japanese. For each of these courses there are tutors who work in that language as well as international student support team members and social media managers.

Tutors in all subject areas tend to be professionals working in that field and many are authors of books or contributors to journals and magazines. Prospective applicants for courses can view the profiles of the tutors on the Provider's websites.

In 2017, there were 24,000 enrolments. The majority of participants are from a wide range of English speaking markets including Australia, UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland and South Africa. Although the courses are aimed at adults, juniors are not currently excluded. In 2017, there were 630 registered participants under the age of 18. The photography course is the most popular and accounted for approximately half of all enrolments.

The Provider employs tutors on a freelance basis. There are currently about 40 tutors worldwide with more being recruited for the newly launched makeup artistry course which had attracted a dozen enrolments in the first week. At the time of the inspection, there were 14,261 enrolments of which 734 were under the age of 18.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over three days at the head office in Warriewood. Meetings were held with the Managing Director and the CEO. Further interviews were held with the Business Development Manager, the Accounts Manager, the Software Engineer and a Graphic Designer. Two of the student support team were interviewed and two tutors. Telephone and online video interviews were held with three further tutors and with three learners. The inspector was given demonstrations on how the Information Technology (IT) platform was used to monitor all activity within the Provider globally, including enrolments and payments, learner assignment submissions, tutor and learner interactions, marked assignments and communications between staff. A weekly staff meeting at the office was attended by the inspector. Modules from all courses and their corresponding assignments were reviewed as were the websites for each course. Staff provided all requested documentation. The setting up of telephone and online video interviews was extremely helpful.

PART B - JUDGMENT AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider.

INSPECTION AREA - MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

1. The provider is effectively managed

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|-----|---|---|
| 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="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.2 | Senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.3 | Senior managers have an understanding of the special requirements of online, distance and blended learning. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.4 | There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff, especially those working remotely. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider has experienced strong growth within the industry. It benefits from a stable core staff team many of whom have been in post for up to ten years. Management and staff have considerable experience in the delivery of online courses.

The Provider's software programme effectively channels all global communications through a single IT platform, accessible to staff working remotely and at head office. Communications between management and staff are handled effectively and efficiently.

2. The administration of online, distance and blended learning is effective

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 2.1 | Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.2 | The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the provision. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.3 | Offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the provider. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.4 | The administrative support available to the management and learners is clearly defined, documented and understood. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.5 | Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.6 | Data collection and collation systems are effective including the logging of tutor and learner submissions | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.7 | Learner and tutor records are sufficient, accurately maintained and up-to-date. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.8 | The provider has a robust security system and policies in place for protecting the data of its learners and tutors. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.9 | Satisfactory procedures are in place for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The staff team has grown and adapted well to an increasing workload. Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their roles and responsibilities well and are effective in carrying them out. They do not have formal job descriptions, which would avoid any overlap in their roles.

The administrative team is appropriate for the current workload although increases in business are beginning to indicate that further support is needed in the areas of digital media and human resources. Therefore, the Provider is looking to recruit a new staff member in the near future.

2.5 Policies and procedures for tutors have been developed over time. These include training materials for dealing with learner communications, marking assignments, keeping to deadlines and other documents. These have been drafted by different members of staff. They are not yet coherently compiled in a single document folder so that tutors are informed of and have access to all relevant documents.

Learner and tutor submissions and records are very effectively logged by the IT platform, giving administrators and management instant access to learner and tutor activity and communications.

3. The provider 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 administrative staff. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3.2 | Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3.3 | There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

3.1 3.2 The procedures for recruiting staff have been informal. Although staff are well qualified and experienced and appropriate for the posts applied for, staff files do not hold details of any references or copies of qualifications.

3.3 Office staff have annual appraisals which are carried out on an informal basis with the CEO. Appraisals identify any issues which may be of concern and acknowledge the contribution of the staff member to the team over the year. Salary increases are discussed at this time. There is no system of self-appraisal, drawing up of action plans or developmental plans. Records of appraisals are not filed. Tutors are not regularly appraised.

4. Publicity material gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the online, distance and blended learning offered

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|-----|---|---|
| 4.1 | The website and other publicity material give an accurate description of the online, distance and blended learning courses offered. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4.2 | All advertising materials and images provide an accurate description of any training offered. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Websites relating to the courses give accurate and comprehensive coverage of essential details including course content, tutors and enrolment and refund procedures. There is the facility to download a prospectus and there are contact details for further enquiries.

INSPECTION AREA - TEACHING, LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

5. Management of the programme is effective

5.1	There is a suitably qualified manager with experience in online, distance and blended learning who has responsibility for teaching, learning and achievement and management of the tutor body.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
5.2	The provider has a sufficient number of qualified tutors to give individualised instructional service to each learner.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.3	The provider has a robust tutor recruitment system which is designed to ensure the safety of the learners. The recruitment process for tutors working remotely includes a face-to-face interview using a suitable online communication platform.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.4	The allocation of tutors to courses provides for a consistent learning experience and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.5	Realistic deadlines are set and communicated well in advance to learners.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.6	Delivery methods are sufficient to attain the stated programme objectives and intended learning outcomes - suitable supplementary study aids have been considered where appropriate, whether via investment in technology, additional tutor support, issuing extra study materials or offering face-to-face learning sessions.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.7	The programme reflects current knowledge and practice. Internal programme reviews are conducted on a periodic basis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.8	The programme is sufficiently comprehensive for learners to achieve the stated programme objectives and its content is supported by sound research and practice.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.9	Commissioning of course materials is managed effectively and materials are checked to ensure standardisation and consistency across the provision.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5.10	Learner assessment is guided by published grading policies and a marking system that includes prompt return of accurately, fairly, and consistently graded assessments.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
5.11	The provider uses assessment strategies which demonstrate the achievement of defined learning outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
5.12	The provider takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating and plagiarism and penalise offenders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
5.13	Learners have appropriate access to tutors for learning support.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The CEO has extensive knowledge and experience of provision of online courses.

5.1 The management and oversight of tutors is not stipulated in any staff member's job description. As a result, the monitoring of tutor performance is not systematically carried out. Tutors report that there is no official scheme or template for assessing learners' work and do not know how their assessments compare with other tutors.

There is an adequate number of tutors for the courses offered. Each learner is assigned to a single tutor. Where a tutor is unable to continue with a course or needs to take time off, a substitute tutor is assigned to the learner. Learners interviewed and feedback from other learners indicate that having an assigned tutor is a strength of the Provider's courses.

All tutors undergo an online interview and their credentials and experience are discussed. Curricula vitae are submitted to the Provider.

Learners under the age of 18 are identified through the enrolment procedure so that they are assigned to tutors who have satisfied the Provider's safeguarding criteria for working with children and have undergone the equivalent of

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks in their various countries. In addition, a member of the head office staff has the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Her role and duties are clearly defined in a job description. She has completed an online Safeguarding Children in Education course and an online Level 3 Designated Safeguarding Officer course. The DSL has also included, in her responsibilities, checking that course content and contributions to media groups are not inappropriate for minors. A comprehensive and detailed Safeguarding policy document is circulated to all staff and includes information on a code of conduct, cyber bullying and anti-grooming.

Parental or guardian permission was not sought or obtained prior to the enrolment of a student under 18. Following recent legal advice from the Provider's law firm, a lower age limit of 16 has now been set. This satisfies the legal advice given relating to minors entering into contracts for educational services and the processing of personal data from minors.

Learners are given clear guidelines on timescales for submitting assignments. Submissions are monitored on the IT platform and timely reminders sent where appropriate. Learners are given up to a year to complete courses. Extensions can be awarded for a fee or, occasionally, on compassionate grounds.

Course materials are regularly updated and tutors are professionals in their fields and are, therefore, up-to-date with current trends and practices. The makeup artistry course has recently been commissioned and the course materials and accompanying videos are impressively contemporary. Where trends change, for example, in interior design, course materials are periodically updated to reflect this.

Learners' work is promptly marked. Tutors are permitted up to five days to turn assignments around and frequently do so more rapidly than this.

5.10 5.11 The awarding of marks for assignments is not systematised. Each tutor uses their discretion, experience and professional expertise in the subject to award marks on a scale of six to ten. Where assessments are graded below six, learners are asked to resubmit. There is no benchmarking or standardisation of the marking scheme and tutors work in isolation. The numerical marking scheme comes with no official descriptors so that learners are dependent on their tutors to explain what their mark signifies.

5.12 There are no specific guidelines for tutors to indicate what measures they should take when learners present work which may not be their own.

Learners have the facility to communicate with their tutors through the IT platform. Good use is made of this facility and learners confirm that they find this one of the major positive features of their course.

6. **Tutors have an acceptable level of subject knowledge and pedagogic skill**

6.1 Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced. Yes No

6.2 Tutors have an understanding of the special challenges and demands of online, distance and blended learning. Yes No

6.3 Tutors have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skill which allows them to deliver the content of programmes effectively. Yes No

6.4 The appraisal procedures for tutors incorporate regular monitoring of tutor feedback. Yes No

6.5 Tutors are properly and continuously trained with respect to provider policies, learner needs, instructional approaches and techniques, and the use of appropriate instructional technology. Yes No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

It is a strength of the Provider that the tutors are professionals in their fields and have an in-depth knowledge of their subjects. Learners consistently comment on this as a major factor in their committing to a course and in their feedback on completion.

Many of the tutors have worked with the Provider for a number of years and have a high level of expertise in the provision of online courses. Some of the tutors were actively involved in the creation of the course materials and are, therefore, able to provide further insights into course material.

6.4 Tutors are monitored from time to time on their comments made in relation to the marking of assignments. However, there is no specific systematic feedback provided to tutors unless a particular issue has been raised. There is no system in place for tutor appraisals.

7. **Tutors respond to the individual learning needs of learners**

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|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 7.1 | The academic backgrounds and particular needs of learners are taken into account in the delivery of the programmes which build on former learning or experience. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7.2 | Learners are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7.3 | Tutors respond to different learning needs of learners where appropriate, taking various learning styles into account in their planning and delivery of courses. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7.4 | Tutors employ effective strategies to check learners' understanding of concepts and programme content. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 7.5 | Learners are made aware of the necessary level of digital literacy required to follow the stated programmes. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Courses are clearly described on the websites. The courses presuppose no previous knowledge. However, tutors are able to respond to contributions from more advanced and able learners so that the needs of these learners can be effectively taken into account in the delivery of the programmes.

The courses constructively encourage learners to work independently to develop a personalised body of work or portfolio.

The assignments relating to course modules check learners' understanding of the concepts well. Exercises and practical activities within the course materials also contribute effectively to conveying key concepts.

The Provider's websites include helpful information for learners on how to study online. The learning platform is easily accessible and support is offered throughout the course by the student support managers if a learner has any IT issues.

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

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|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 8.1 | Programmes are planned to include a schedule of assessments, the procedures and criteria for which are available in writing and in advance to learners and tutors. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 8.2 | Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of learners who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 8.3 | Learners are made aware of how their progress relates to their target level of achievement. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 8.4 | Additional support or advice on alternative programmes is provided to learners who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |

8.5 Feedback is given to individual learners on a regular basis, tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery. Yes No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Appropriate assignments are set at the end of each module. Course requirements are clearly laid out in the pre-course information given to learners. Satisfactory completion of a module is a pre-requisite for moving on to the next module.

Learners are able to resubmit their work if it does not reach the required standard. Tutors give detailed and constructive feedback on the assignments and coach learners on how to improve their work. The majority of learners submit satisfactory assignments at first attempt but occasionally a second draft is required.

Learners may freely correspond with their tutors through the IT platform e-mail system if they require advice or further information on the modules.

9. Assessments are designed to support and encourage the learning process, as well as to monitor and establish the level of ability acquired by the learner

9.1 Assignments and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body. Yes No NA

9.2 Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

Assignments are well focused to reinforce the content of the modules.

INSPECTION AREA – LEARNER SUPPORT

10. The enrolment process is comprehensive, transparent and supportive to applicants

10.1 Applicants are provided with enough information to enable them to make a judgement on their suitability for the course and the delivery methods and can discuss any concerns before enrolment. Yes No

10.2 Enrolment and application documentation is easily accessible and simple to complete and submit. Yes No

10.3 Learners are given advance information about course requirements and equipment for succeeding in the programme. The provider takes reasonable steps to ensure that learners accepted for enrolment meet these requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified. Yes No

10.4 Learners are enrolled on programmes under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions. If only limited information can be made available, suitably extended refund arrangements should be in place. Yes No

10.5 The provider makes it clear to applicants that they are responsible for checking that they have the skills and knowledge required to study on the chosen course. Yes No

10.6 After enrolment, the applicant has the benefit of a stated cooling off period during which they can cancel the enrolment. Yes No

10.7 Learners are made aware of the language proficiency needed to study on and complete the programmes. Yes No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The websites have clear and useful information for learners, which provides a good overview of courses and how they are delivered. The learners interviewed confirmed that they had found the enrolment procedure easy and had received prompt and helpful information when contacting the Provider for more information on the courses. Inspection findings confirm this view.

The terms and conditions are fair and transparent and clearly presented on the websites. They could be expanded to cover other eventualities such as a change of tutor. There is a seven day refund policy to comply with Australian law.

Courses are available in a number of languages. Although there is no specific level of language indicated in terms of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the website clearly indicates to learners the level of language required through descriptions of the courses and other content. Those interested in enrolling have the facility to contact the Provider if they have enquiries of any nature.

11. Services provided meet the reasonable needs of learners

11.1 Instructions and suggestions on how to study and how to use the tutorial materials are made available to assist learners to learn effectively and efficiently. Yes No

11.2 Staff are available to assist learners to resolve issues of a general and/or technological nature. All enquiries from learners are handled promptly and sympathetically. Yes No

11.3 The provider ensures that learners understand any system requirements and have access to appropriate technical advice to assist with technological problems which are the provider's responsibility. Yes No

11.4 The provider supports and encourages peer-interaction through a variety of communication channels including social media. Yes No

11.5 Learners who are unable to make satisfactory progress through the programme are encouraged to continue and supported to achieve a satisfactory outcome wherever possible or offered an alternative programme. Yes No

11.6 Learners have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the programme. Yes No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The learner section of the IT platform has a useful facility which enables learners to navigate easily through the system processes.

Student support managers are on hand to give advice and resolve any technological issues which may arise. Response time for enquiries is very quick, frequently immediate and always within one or two days at most.

Learners are encouraged to join the Provider's online social media group for their course. Learners report that they find this helpful as for the most part they are working individually and in isolation.

The IT platform promptly picks up on learners who are falling behind schedule with their assignments. These learners are contacted and given support and encouragement to continue with their course.

11.6 Although learners have access to support managers for any issues, there is no specific complaints procedure.

12. Course materials are appropriate to the medium of delivery and are effective

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|------|---|---|
| 12.1 | Course materials are designed for a specific and clearly stated level of study and include appropriate support when necessary. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 12.2 | Course materials are appropriately presented and sufficiently comprehensive to enable learners to achieve the programme objectives. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 12.3 | Course materials are accurate and reflect current knowledge and practice and are regularly reviewed and revised. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 12.4 | Programme designers make effective use of appropriate teaching aids and learning resources. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 12.5 | The provider makes effective provisions for learners to access conventional and online resources. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Course materials are well presented, appropriate to online delivery and motivational. The new makeup artistry course includes a range of video clips to enhance interest and learning. Other courses have been regularly updated as technology and trends change. Where courses have been translated into other languages, consideration has been given to cultural differences.

Modules specify additional resources for further study or exploration and tutors frequently offer guidance on resources beyond the module content.

13. The technology used to deliver the programmes is fit for purpose and effective

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|------|---|---|
| 13.1 | The provider uses appropriate and readily accessible technology to optimise interaction between the provider and the learner and enhance instructional and educational services. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 13.2 | The provider has access to the services of an experienced Information Technology (IT) technician who can ensure that systems are operative at all times and provide support to learners, tutors and staff working remotely. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The IT platform is an impressive system, which is tailor-made to meet the Provider's requirements. Sections of the platform are made available to staff, tutors, learner support managers and learners. Head office staff are able to oversee the global interaction of all users with the system. Learners download their modules and do not need to be online to work through the materials. The system has proved to be robust and is maintained by the Head Software Engineer who operates from New York and a software engineer on the staff in Australia. There are international learner support managers who, by means of a rota, are available round the clock to provide global support.

The Provider has recently introduced an innovative portfolio feature to the website to allow learners to display their work.

INSPECTION AREA – MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

14. The provider has effective systems to monitor its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement

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|------|--|---|
| 14.1 | There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the provider's performance. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 14.2 | Reports are compiled at least annually which present the results of the provider's reviews and incorporate action plans. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

14.3 Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on learner satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates. Yes No NA

14.4 Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to the management. Yes No

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

This standard is judged to be:

Comments

Regular weekly staff meetings are held at the offices with online conferencing available for contributions from remote staff members. Action plans are drawn up from these meetings and software tools are used to assign tasks and deadlines to staff members. The members of the management and administration team work well together in an open plan office, which facilitates the effective monitoring of performance by the CEO on an ongoing basis.

The CEO produces an informative in-house annual newsletter for distribution among the office staff. This publication includes a review of statistics on enrolments, feedback, news of changes and plans for the next six months.

14.2 14.3 There is no annual performance report, which is sufficiently detailed and provides an effective management tool so that the owner and the CEO can formally measure annual performance against targets set.

15. Learner progress is effectively monitored and the monitoring is linked to procedures to allow for prompt intervention where appropriate

15.1 Prompt action is taken when learners miss deadlines, when set, or work submitted is not of a satisfactory standard. Yes No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

Tutors and support staff are promptly and efficiently alerted when the IT platform detects that learners are behind schedule with their courses, so that appropriate action can be taken.

16. The provider has a means of accessing and monitoring the views of learners and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary

16.1 The provider has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from learners and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner providers and employers) on all aspects of the provider's provision. Yes No

16.2 The feedback is regularly reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary. Yes No

16.3 There is a mechanism for ensuring learners know what action has been taken as a result of their feedback. Yes No

16.4 Opinions of learners are systematically sought as one basis for evaluating and improving tutorial materials, the delivery of instructions and educational services. Yes No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Feedback from learners is requested only at the end of their course and is used to contribute to the bank of testimonials published on the websites. It is reviewed and action taken if necessary.

16.1 16.4 The requirement to provide feedback is optional and not always taken up and, therefore, the rate of return can be low. Several of the questions asked in the feedback survey are of a very general nature and are unlikely to produce data which might lead to constructive change. Feedback is not sought from tutors in any systematic way.

16.3 The feedback is generally positive. However, there is no formal mechanism for reporting on the action taken as a result of learner feedback, should this be necessary.

17. There is a clear rationale for courses leading to unaccredited or internal awards (this does not apply to the provision of certificates of attendance only)

- 17.1 There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the RQF where applicable and evidence that learners who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level. Yes No NA
- 17.2 There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study. Yes No NA
- 17.3 External moderators are involved in the assessment process if appropriate to the level or programme being studied. Yes No NA

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

Comments

The Provider makes no claims for equivalences of their courses with national qualifications. However, there is a clear statement about the internal standards that must be met to be successful in the programmes and evidence that these have been met appropriately through the assessment mechanisms in place.

There is good evidence, in the numerous testimonials on the websites, that former learners have found the courses provide an effective gateway to employment or to further study, for example at university.

18. There are satisfactory procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment

- 18.1 Evidence is provided that the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration are complied with. Yes No NA
- 18.2 For internal awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration, and clear procedures for learners to appeal against their marks. Yes No NA
- 18.3 The provider has processes through which the provider verifies that the learner who registers in the programme is the same learner who participates in and completes and receives the credit. Yes No NA

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

Comments

There are no formal examinations requiring specific security arrangements. Learners are able to question their assignment marks with their tutors or with a learner support manager.

The courses do not lead to a national recognised qualification or credits towards a formal qualification and do not have examinations. Assessment is often portfolio based. Therefore, it is unlikely that enrolments and assessments would be subject to cases of identity fraud.

INSPECTION AREA - FACE-TO-FACE COMPONENT (if applicable)

19. The provider has secure possession of and access to its premises

- 19.1 The provider has secure tenure on its premises. Yes No NA

19.2 Where required, the provider 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

The provider owns the office suite from which it operates.

For marketing purposes and mail forwarding, the Provider makes use of serviced offices in several countries. However, no employees of the Provider work in these offices.

20. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for learners and staff

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider owns and occupies a modern open plan office suite in an office block. The office block is in a good state of repair and appropriate for the Provider's activity.

No learners visit the premises and visitors are rare, as all communications are carried out remotely. Fire drills are carried out regularly and health and safety notices are appropriately displayed. There is appropriate fire-fighting and first aid equipment.

21. Training rooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the programmes offered

21.1 Training rooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them. Yes No

21.2 Training rooms and/or any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, workshops and studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each programme. Yes No

21.3 There are facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required on each programme. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

22. There is an appropriate policy on learner attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it

- 22.1 There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on learner attendance and punctuality. Yes No
- 22.2 Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all learners, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly. Yes No NA
- 22.3 Learner absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken. Yes No NA

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

Comments

23. There are appropriate additional facilities for learners and staff

- 23.1 Learners have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private study, including library and IT resources. Yes No
- 23.2 Tutors have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation. Yes No
- 23.3 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

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

Comments

23.1 23.2 The Provider's premises are not used by learners or tutors. Therefore, these key indicators are not applicable.

The offices are fit for purpose and provide an effective working environment.

24. Learners attending face-to-face components receive appropriate support

- 24.1 There is at least one named staff member responsible for learner welfare who is suitably trained, accessible to all learners and available to provide advice and counselling. Yes No
- 24.2 Learners receive appropriate advice before arrival. Yes No
- 24.3 Learners receive an appropriate induction and relevant information upon arrival. Yes No
- 24.4 Learners are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support. Yes No NA
- 24.5 The provider has policies in place to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour. Yes No

24.6 Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place and are regularly reviewed to keep all learners safe. Yes No NA

24.7 Effective arrangements are in place to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Yes No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

25. International learners are provided with specific advice and assistance

25.1 International learners receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and living in the UK. Yes No

25.2 International learners receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area. Yes No

25.3 Information and advice specific to international learners continues to be available throughout the programme of study. Yes No

25.4 Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations. Yes No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

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

26.1 Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to the needs of learners. Yes No

26.2 Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted where learners under 18 are accommodated. Yes No NA

26.3 A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of learners. Yes No

26.4 Separate accommodation blocks are provided for learners under 18. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

27. Where home-stay accommodation is organised, the welfare of learners is ensured and the provider's relationship with hosts is properly managed

- | | | |
|------|---|--|
| 27.1 | Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation which both provides a safe and comfortable living environment for learners and is appropriately located for travel to the provider and back. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 27.2 | Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before learners are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the provider. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 27.3 | The provider has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 27.4 | Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and learners before and during the placement. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

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

Provider's Strengths

There is a stable office team many of whom have been with the Provider for up to ten years and are fully conversant with the systems and procedures.

The close relationship of the team makes for a friendly, constructive and cooperative working environment.

The Provider has expert knowledge of the requirements of providing online courses and related marketing strategies.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
2.5 Policies and procedures for tutors must be coherently compiled in a single document folder so that staff are informed of and have access to all relevant documents.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
3.1 3.2 When new staff are recruited references must be filed and qualifications checked with copies held on file.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
3.3 Annual appraisals for staff and tutors must be comprehensive, structured and formally documented.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

Provider's Strengths

Tutors are highly experienced and respected professionals in their fields.

Learners appreciate and benefit from the fact that they have a named tutor assigned to them.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
5.1 Tutor performance must be systematically monitored.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
5.10 5.11 Marking of learners' assignments must be standardised with a marking scheme that is transparent and meaningful to learners.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
5.12 Guidelines relating to plagiarised work must be produced for tutors.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
6.4 There must be regular appraisals of tutors.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

LEARNER SUPPORT

Provider's Strengths

Learners and staff benefit from an impressive and highly effective IT platform where different sections of the platform can be made available to staff, tutors, learner support managers and learners.

Head office staff are able to oversee the global interaction of all users with the system.

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
11.6 Learners must have access to a clearly indicated complaints procedure.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Provider's Strengths

Actions Required	Priority H/M/L
14.2 14.3 Management must produce annual performance reports which detail the year's activity against targets and incorporate action plans.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
16.1 16.4 Detailed feedback from learners and tutors must be systematically collected at different stages of the programme and analysed to identify areas for improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
16.3 The Provider must introduce a formal mechanism for reporting on the action taken as a result of learner feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low

FACE-TO-FACE COMPONENT (if applicable)

Provider's Strengths

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

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

To be reviewed at the next inspection

The Provider should introduce formal job descriptions for administrators in order to avoid any overlap in their roles and for clarity.

Terms and conditions could be expanded to cover other eventualities such as a change of tutor.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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