

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Knightsbridge Trading Academy

ADDRESS: 7th Floor
Tower 42
25, Old Broad Street
London
EC2N 1HQ

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr James Lawrence

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 27 November 2018

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 28 March 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Knightsbridge Trading Academy (KTA/the Provider) is a private limited company with a single shareholder, who is also the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). It offers short accredited and non-accredited courses in financial trading since being established in September 2015.

The Provider is located in the centre of the City of London. Since the last inspection the Provider has moved its office from the fifth to the seventh floor of the premises as a result of site refurbishment. The face-to-face training is delivered at the London Stock Exchange (LSE) and at the David Game College.

KTA employs a Relationship Manager who has significant administrative duties, a Chief Market Strategist who has significant responsibility for teaching and learning, an International Development Officer, and a number of part-time, self-employed tutors.

The aim of the Provider is to provide the highest calibre of financial trading learning by equipping the participants with the latest financial skills, strategies and understanding of technology with a vision to become the sector leader.

KTA supports a number of universities and business schools by providing online and classroom-based learning. This prepares students for the Chartered Institute of Securities and Investment (CISI) Level 3 Introduction to International Securities and Investment examination. KTA has signed the Armed Forces Covenant and is committed to supporting ex-service men and women in their re-integration into civilian life. This is done by enabling interested service leavers to gain commercial experience and build a career in the financial markets following completion of an online or classroom based programme.

KTA has provided training overseas in the past. It will consider continuing this provision if a suitable opportunity arises but does not see this as an immediate priority. Delivery is therefore based in the United Kingdom (UK), with the vast majority of students enrolled on online courses.

2. Brief description of the current provision

KTA offers six training programmes. These are a five-week Master Trader Programme which is now only delivered online, a two-day Forex Bootcamp where live trades are conducted to enable participants to learn how to read the markets, an Accredited Online Trader Programme offered in association with the London Stock Exchange Academy, the Institutional Trader Programme delivered at head office and the headquarters of the London Stock Exchange Group, an online Introduction to Financial Markets course and an online Fund Manager Programme. The Master Trading programme and Forex Bootcamp courses are accredited through the Continuing Professional Development Certification Service (CPDCS), and the trader programme courses are accredited by the CISI and CPDCS.

During the inspection, three online courses were being delivered to a total of 15 participants. These were the Introduction to Financial Markets, Accredited Online Trader Programme, and Online Master programme. All participants were aged over 18, mostly male, and from the UK. Enrolment is an ongoing process with nine participants currently booked on future online courses and two booked for face-to-face delivery.

KTA's total capacity for the delivery of face-to-face courses at any one time is 30 participants. However, course capacity is more likely to be for 12 to 15 participants.

Participants are carefully vetted, particularly in relation to their financial security and their reasons for wanting to participate in the programmes of study. Participants with little or no prior experience of financial markets can enrol but the vetting process serves to ensure that their reasons for doing so are genuine and considered.

3. **Inspection process**

The inspection was conducted by one inspector over one day. Meetings were held with the CEO, the Relationship Manager, the Chief Market Strategist, and the International Development Officer. The inspector visited the Provider's new offices and reviewed the documentation provided. All information required by the inspector was readily available and the organisation cooperated very well with the inspection.

4. **Inspection History**

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	5-6 June 2018

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 institution.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

The Provider has moved its office from the fifth to the seventh floor of its premises as a result of site refurbishment.

The full-time Relationship Manager and full-time Chief Market Strategist have been replaced. The International Development Officer is a new part-time post intended to promote university relationships.

The Introduction to Financial Markets course and Fund Manager Programme are new online courses that have been added to the provision. These courses are not yet accredited but KTA may seek accreditation in the future.

2. Response to actions points in last report

17.7 The Provider must formalise arrangements to protect participants from radicalisation and extremism.

The Provider has responded positively to this action point, placing an appropriate policy statement about tackling radicalisation and extremism in both the student handbook and the staff handbook, and incorporating the statement into the Safeguarding and Student Welfare policy.

This statement establishes the Provider's commitment to ensuring that students and staff understand what radicalisation and extremism are, why vigilance is necessary, and that students and staff will follow the policy guidance when issues arise. The statement also confirms that students will understand the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, build resilience and know what to do in the event of experiencing them.

However, the statement makes reference to a detailed policy regarding extremism and radicalisation that sets out the Provider's beliefs, strategies and procedures to protect vulnerable individuals from being radicalised or exposed to extremist views. This policy was not available.

A risk assessment and staff training have also been carried out.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that KTA updates the policies and procedures so that the wordings are consistent across all the documents and they are relevant to the current work of KTA.

The Provider has added its logo and name to key documents. However, some of the wordings remain inconsistent and not relevant to the current work of KTA, for example, the nature of the employment regulations that are identified in the staff handbook.

It is recommended that KTA keeps all copies of classroom observations in order to provide evidence of continuing quality.

The Provider has an appropriate template to record classroom observations. The observation template could be developed further to include, for example key strengths and areas for improvement, in order to improve the analysis of the trainers' performance.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

There is a simple, effective, and clearly defined management structure and the members of the team work well together. The CEO is very well qualified in understanding the markets and the needs of the participants because of his extensive experience and knowledge of the sector. The recruitment of the International Development Officer represents a deliberate strategy to improve KTA's profile with universities and to develop additional relationships.

The CEO and the Relationship Manager carry out many of the administrative tasks. They understand their roles well and the administration of the organisation is therefore effective and efficient.

The administrative function continues to benefit from the very effective use of technology, social media and sophisticated Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems. Data collection is extremely efficient, well organised and collated using effective CRM tools.

Appropriate staff recruitment policies and procedures are in place, and former students are made aware of employment opportunities.

Publicity material is clear, accurate and up-to-date. Social media is used effectively to deliver information to suitable potential participants.

Enrolment information is clear and the Provider takes considerable care in vetting applicants to ensure the course purpose and requirements are clear, and that the applicants' reasons for wishing to enrol are appropriate for the course offered. The Provider is very keen to ensure that the needs of participants are met.

Attendance information is made clear to participants and processes are effectively managed. The Provider has a policy that if any participant arrives to consecutive sessions late more than twice, he or she is removed from the course and given a full refund. However, participant attendance and punctuality are very high reflecting the professional nature of the provision and the suitability of the participants.

The Provider uses an online process to collect feedback from participants, facilitated by an independent organisation. Feedback is very positive with over 80 per cent of responders rating KTA as excellent. Informal feedback is also obtained during the course through questioning of participants by the CEO. Participants are informed, where possible, about what has been done in response to their feedback. However, there are no formal mechanisms to make sure this is done in all cases.

KTA continues to monitor, assess and evaluate its own performance by using online project management tools and an online notes system. This creates an action plan that enables KTA to identify areas for continuous improvement and to respond quickly to changes of circumstance.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Courses are managed effectively by the Chief Market Strategist and the CEO. The CEO writes the manual for the unaccredited courses. The Chief Market Strategist is responsible for monitoring the financial markets and updating courses and course materials. This ensures that course content is always up-to-date and topical. Accredited courses have content identified by the accrediting body and meet the necessary requirements.

The CEO is responsible for managing the trainers and ensuring that course delivery aligns with course content. This ensures that course and delivery is effectively coordinated and expectations are clear. The CEO also coordinates the provision of space and resources at the London Stock Exchange and David Game College to ensure that the participants' needs are met.

The trainers are all accredited LSE Academy trainers and CISI accredited, with wide experience and expertise in the world of financial trading. This ensures that the participants receive a high level of advice and guidance.

Classroom observations are conducted by the CEO. While classroom observations are completed, they are not scheduled as part of the performance management procedure.

The online courses include multiple choice questions to help participants build upon their knowledge and understanding. Participants progress can be monitored electronically so appropriate support can be provided if difficulties are experienced. Mock assessments are used in the Institutional Trader Programme that reflect the final examination, and peer marking is used to help develop the knowledge and understanding of the participants. Independent learning is expected in order to prepare for the examinations.

Participants are also made aware of their progress through question and answer sessions and examination preparation support. Assessments are conducted according to strict conditions, both in-house and through the CISI, and meet all the necessary requirements. Individual feedback is provided to participants either face-to-face, by telephone or by e-mail if requested, so that participants always have access to support intended to ensure their success.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Advice and support are provided to participants by the CEO or Relationships Manager before the course has commenced to ensure that all requirements and expectations have been fully understood. An out-of-hours telephone number and e-mail contact is provided.

An induction is provided at face-to-face courses covering key areas such as fire safety, security, course timing and breaks, personal conduct, and who to contact in the events of an emergency or problem.

Staff are briefed about discrimination and appropriate behaviour and it is made clear that standards must meet the requirements expected within the profession.

While no international participants were present during the inspection, provision is in place so that any such participants receive appropriate support and assistance regarding, for example, visas, travel and accommodation prior to arrival in the UK. Proficiency in English and Business English is expected from all international participants.

Prayer and faith facilities are available if requested.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The Provider has appropriate security of tenure at its head office. The head office benefits from a high level of maintenance and cleanliness. It is suitably equipped and kept secure for storage of equipment and possessions. There is appropriate space for private meetings or training delivery to smaller groups if required.

Health and safety information is clearly displayed and there is good ventilation and heating in what is very modern, well equipped, and prestigious premises. There is adequate space to circulate and a suitable reception area where visitors may be received. The toilet facilities are appropriate in number and very well maintained. Good relaxation space and facilities are available elsewhere in the building.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Strong ethical approach to business, the sector and social responsibility that inspires confidence.

Well planned courses and materials that are suitable to meet the requirements of a fast changing and challenging business environment.

Well qualified and suitably experienced trainers.

Prestigious locations, premises and facilities.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High

Medium

Low

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

The policy, that is mentioned in the policy statement about tackling radicalisation and extremism, that sets out the Provider’s beliefs, strategies and procedures to protect vulnerable individuals from being radicalised, should be made available.

It is recommended that KTA conducts a further review of its policies and procedures to ensure that all the wording is appropriate and up-to-date.

It is recommended that the classroom observation template be developed further to improve analysis and performance.

It is recommended that KTA develops clear mechanisms for informing participants what actions have been taken from the feedback received so participants are made aware of the results of the feedback they have provided.

It is recommended that classroom observations be scheduled as part of the performance management procedure so a clear and consistent approach is evident.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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