



## **BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT**

### **INTERIM INSPECTION (International Centre)**

**INSTITUTION:** Access Bank School of Banking Excellence

**ADDRESS:** 90 and 92 Allen Avenue  
Ikeja, Lagos  
Nigeria

**HEAD OF INSTITUTION:** Ms Neka Udezue

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Accredited

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 26 August 2019

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** 28 November 2019

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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### **1. Background to the institution**

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Access Bank School of Banking Excellence (the Institution) was established in 2003 and is owned by Access Bank PLC. It is the training arm of Access Bank for graduate entrants to the bank and also provides training for existing bank staff.

The Institution is based in Lagos, Nigeria. Its main role is to provide Access Bank trainees with all the relevant education and skills required for working in the Bank and for pursuing a career within the bank. This is achieved through the Institution's Entry Level Training Programme (ELTP). The purpose of the ELTP is to equip them with the skill set required to function in the bank while enabling its graduates to progress rapidly through the qualifications of the Chartered Institute of Bankers Nigeria (CIBN). The Institution achieved initial accreditation from the CIBN in 2014 and this was renewed in 2017, after the development of enhancements in the ELTP curriculum and stronger alignment with the CIBN syllabus. Graduates from the ELTP obtain exemptions from the CIBN examinations. They are required to take one examination at the CIBN Intermediate Professional level, three at the CIBN Chartered Banker final level to obtain associate membership of the CIBN and the use of the designation Associate of the Chartered Institute of Bankers (ACIB).

The mission of the Institution is to provide an appropriate training programme for entry level graduates to ensure they are fully prepared for future roles in Access Bank so employees can give their best for the organisation and the community.

The Programme Director has overall responsibility for the management of the Institution including setting its curriculum in consultation, through Access Bank's Human Resources department, with the Learning Advisory Board (LAB). The LAB, which reports to the Human Resources Board Committee, has oversight responsibility for the Institution.

The Institution has two training centres located in the Ikeja and Lekki districts of Lagos. The training centre in Ikeja comprises two buildings next door to each other. A third training centre at Yaba, another district of Lagos, is expected to become operational in the near future as outlined in the 2018 Learning and Development Plan. This centre is intended to provide training to existing bank staff by providing additional training opportunities to support staff. In addition, Access Bank intends to expand by building a campus on another site over the next five years on which it will consolidate its provision from the current three sites. It has further aspirations to become a higher education institution within the same time period.

### **2. Brief description of the current provision**

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The ELTP programme covers 37 subject modules, including banking and finance, accountancy, management and leadership, project management, ethics, personal effectiveness and marketing. Each module comprises one to seven days of face-to-face tuition and the programme is completed over an intensive five-month period. An additional course is offered through the Professional Certification Training Programme (PCTP) which helps prepare ELTP graduates to achieve full CIBN associate membership. This course covers the elements of the CIBN qualification that are not included in the ELTP exemptions. The course is also offered to existing bank employees who also wish to achieve the CIBN qualification and gain associate membership.

Admission to the ELTP is by selection and there is strong competition for places. The minimum entry requirement is an upper second-class honours degree from selected universities. The universities are selected from a list of high-quality verified institutions and a maximum age limit of 24 years, or 26 years if the applicant has a postgraduate or law degree.

There are normally 350 to 400 learners per cohort studying full time and the Institution has a capacity for 500 learners over the academic year. At the time of inspection, there were 194 learners enrolled. The

majority of learners are female. There are no learners under the age of 18. Recruitment takes place once a year for the ELTP course and the course runs twice per year.

Besides those from Nigeria, learners are enrolled through Access Bank's subsidiaries in Africa including Ghana, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ivory Coast and Burundi. Access Bank has recently recruited graduates from Mozambique. The Institution has a hostel which exclusively houses its international learners. At the time of the inspection, the majority of learners were Nigerian with some learners recruited from Rwanda, DRC, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Mozambique.

### **3. Inspection process**

The inspection was carried out by one inspector in one day. Meetings were held with the Programme Director and Learner Services Manager. Additional meetings were held with learners and training staff. Learners were taking examinations at the time of the inspection. One observation of the examination and invigilation process was carried out. Full cooperation with the inspection was provided by the Institution's staff.

### **4. Inspection History**

<b>Inspection Type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Full Accreditation	15-16 May 2018

## **PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

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*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**

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Access Bank has recently merged with Diamond Bank in Nigeria. This has had no impact on the management and delivery of the Institution's training programmes.

Two new courses have been added to the curriculum offer. Digital Banking and Enterprise Risk Management. Additional podcasts have been developed to support learners on the PCTP programme. The podcasts are accessible in the evening and on Saturday.

### **2. Response to actions points in last report**

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*3.3 A formal process of staff appraisal and development must be established.*

The Programme Director conducts formal annual staff appraisal and development meetings with trainers. Action plans from the newly established validation panel and observation outcomes from lead peer observers inform the appraisal process. The validation panel verifies the standard of teaching, learning and assessment. Trainers are also encouraged to use self-reflection to identify any additional training needs. This results in a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plan that identifies training needs and how these needs can be met. The Programme Director monitors the timely completion of identified actions. Trainers highly value the process.

*11.3 The staff appraisal system must incorporate regular classroom observation and include feedback given to trainers.*

The staff appraisal system incorporates the outcomes of regular classroom observations. Classroom observations include oral and written feedback to trainers. Written feedback is clear and focused and provides useful information on strengths and areas to improve and how support will be provided. Trainers use self-reflection to identify any additional personal training needs. The process is highly valued by the trainers.

### **3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report**

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*Minutes of staff meetings should be recorded formally rather than in handwritten note form. The qualifications of new trainers should be recorded and copies taken and held on file.*

Evidence of well-developed, formally recorded staff meetings includes action plans with timelines and responsible person identified. There is a clear focus on teaching and learning and management of the programme. Evidence shows well monitored progress against actions in staff meetings and many actions are completed. Trainers value the formal recording of actions and confirm that it has improved communication and supported a fast pace of improvement.

Electronic files are now kept for all trainers including new members of staff. Academic and professional qualifications are recorded and copies are held electronically.

*It is recommended that a regular meeting with class representatives is held to discuss issues and to provide feedback on actions taken in response to learners' feedback.*

Learners confirm that regular meetings with class representatives are planned daily at the beginning or end of training. A social media group has been arranged with records kept centrally. The centrally kept records include regular and prompt feedback to issues that have been raised as well as feedback from managers. The social media group allows learners to raise issues on a regular basis and provides an effective means of

communication, including informing learners of the management response. Learners confirm that responses are prompt and informative. Meetings with class representatives allow any additional discussion if required. Learners value the direct form of communication and prompt response. Learners also confirm that, if the response to requests cannot be met, information is provided which explains why this cannot happen.

*It is recommended that the overall stakeholder feedback process is clearly articulated in order to better inform subject module, programme and annual reviews.*

Stakeholders surveys, that include a clear focus on strengths and areas to improve in teaching, learning and curriculum development are sent to learners, the human resources department and employers. The analysis of the resulting data results in comprehensive and focused action plans for improvement. Information from the surveys is used to inform programme reviews, which include subject module evaluation. The information gathered from the surveys also informs annual reviews. This has resulted in improvements in teaching and learning delivery methods and resources and includes more effective ways to engage students in the materials and checking on learning and understanding.

*Action plans emanating from programme reviews should be regularly discussed at the Learning Advisory Board meetings and service level agreements between the Institution and the human resource department could be established to improve information flows between them.*

Minutes and actions from programme reviews are regularly discussed at the learning advisory board meetings. Progress against actions is closely monitored and has resulted in the implementation of key areas of improvement that has resulted in more effective monitoring and management of the quality of teaching and learning. A service level agreement has been developed between the Institution and the human resources department, which includes agreed focused actions and timelines. The Programme Manager and Administrative staff monitor the response to the actions through the service level agreement. The Programme Manager confirms this has resulted in improved timeliness and responsiveness to operational needs.

*It is recommended that the teaching and pedagogic skills of the trainers are reviewed, and good teaching practice introduced where deficiencies are found including the sharing of best practice.*

A new validation board has been established to review the teaching and pedagogic skills of trainers. The board consists of a panel of specialists including members of the Chartered Institute of Banking, two experienced and high performing trainers and representatives from the learning advisory board. Trainers receive validation from the panel in order to continue in their role as a trainer. Trainers deliver a short teaching session to representatives of the training team which is observed by the panel. Feedback is provided from peers and the validation panel.

Trainers receive a comprehensive CPD plan which identifies good practice to be shared and deficiencies that need improvement. This has resulted in training plans for improvement that reflect effective feedback on pedagogic skills and professional knowledge and skills updating. Trainers will be validated every two years.

Trainers are observed in the classroom on a regular basis by their peers. A self-reflective action plan that includes feedback from the lead trainer is developed and provided for all trainers. All actions plans are monitored by the Programme Manager. Trainers report that individual practice has improved, particularly in expanding the range of delivery strategies. Peer observation outcomes are discussed at Faculty meetings.

Trainers confirm that the process has had a significant impact on standardising the quality of teaching, learning and assessment including the use of resources. Learners report that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is excellent.

*It is recommended that a system of written guidance on examination performance for distribution to learners is established.*

The majority of trainers provide written guidance on examination scripts. However, it was decided to pilot the distribution of high scoring responses to particular questions to learners who did not score well. The scripts are anonymised. Learners confirmed that the use of exemplar answers to questions has been highly effective in informing them of how to answer questions to improve their score. The improvement in achievement data is attributable to changes in monitoring and responding to deficiencies in teaching and learning and a more effective feedback process. Data shows that achievement has increased from 65 per cent to 75 per cent.

#### **4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements**

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##### **4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)**

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

##### **Comments**

Management, staffing and administration are highly effective. The Institution has a clear management structure in place which ensures good leadership and management.

The administration team is small and well managed. Well-developed formal and informal communication channels ensure effective communication.

Policies and procedures are well developed and comprehensive, shared at induction and are available online. Formal appraisals take place once a year. Informal monthly meetings are used to monitor achievement against targets from appraisals and to provide support.

The information on the website is comprehensive and provides detailed information on all relevant course information.

The Institution has highly effective recruitment processes that ensure learners are suitably qualified and experienced for their programme of study.

Attendance is well monitored. International learners are resident and the support staff in the accommodation promptly report any absences that are usually due to illness. Any absence is followed up effectively by the Programme Manager.

Outcomes of observations, participant feedback, trainer feedback, programme reviews and annual reviews inform well-developed action plans. Action planning for improvement is comprehensive and well monitored.

##### **4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)**

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

##### **Comments**

Teaching, learning and assessment is highly effective. Timetables ensure appropriate trainers are allocated to classes. Well-qualified and experienced trainers deliver specific modules across programmes to ensure learners experience high levels of teaching expertise.

Lesson plans and schemes of work show a high level of planning with a good focus on engagement, assessment and feedback. Monitoring of learners' progress occurs regularly.

Regular homework and project work encourage the development of independent learning skills.

Teaching staff are well-qualified and experienced. Their training needs are well supported including by means of encouraging external attendance at conferences.

Learning resources are of a high quality and support high levels of achievement and progress. Resources are reviewed on a regular basis, including input from external professionals.

Staff are available outside teaching time. This includes regular contact by means of online communication platforms.

Examinations are well administered with high levels of security. The procedures for examination invigilation are in line with expected standards. The learners undertake an internal examination developed by the Institution.

The response to staff appraisal and development has resulted in motivated and supported trainers and high levels of satisfaction from learners.

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#### 4.3 Learner Welfare (spot check)

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

**Comments**

Learner welfare is comprehensive and effective.

The welfare provision is appropriate for the nature of the provision and meets the learners' needs well. The course induction programme is comprehensive and includes information on a wide range of learner services.

Learners have access to a learner welfare team. The team provides counselling, academic support and delivers the induction programme. Members of the team also ensure learners are settled into their accommodation and provide out of hours support. The Programme Manager provides one-to-one coaching and mentoring to learners who are at risk of not making good progress.

There is a range of policies to safeguard learners from bullying, discrimination and radicalisation and extremism. There is a named safeguarding officer.

Cultural and religious needs are well-supported, including the provision of a wide range of food to accommodate cultural preferences.

Learners are highly satisfied with the service provided.

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#### 4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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

**Comments**

Premises and facilities are of a good standard. The Institution is operating in a suite of office and classroom facilities over three floors in a building leased by the Institution, and on two floors in another building owned by the Institution.

Access to the premises is secured by a locked door and is gained by means of a buzzer system and remotely operated opening mechanism. Security guards are present on each floor.

All areas are appropriately decorated and display health and safety information including fire exit signage. Toilet facilities are clean and are available on each floor. There is adequate cooling, lighting and ventilation.

There are a number of small offices, teaching rooms, an information technology suite, social space and a gymnasium. There is adequate space for the number of learners. Learners have access to appropriate space for independent study. The facilities ensure an appropriate learning environment.

The teaching staff undertake most of their preparation work from home but are able to access rooms at the Institution's premises as necessary. Wireless connectivity is available to learners, staff and visitors.

The administrative offices are small, but appropriate for the size of the provision.

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#### 4.5 Compliance Declaration

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**Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.**

Yes     No

**PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS**

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**STRENGTHS**

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Highly effective management that has resulted in rapid and innovative responses to actions and recommendations which have driven quality improvement.

Comprehensive and innovative approaches to improving the teaching and pedagogic skills of facilitators which has resulted in improved achievement rates, motivated trainers and highly satisfied learners.

Innovative and learner focused feedback processes that have resulted in prompt responses and effective feedback to issues and concerns.

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**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

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None

High     Medium     Low

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

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None

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**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE**

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