

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: MIS Training (UK) Ltd

ADDRESS: 30 Crown Place
Moorgate
London
EC2A 4EB

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Raj Sood

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 3 December 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Probation accreditation 26 March 2020

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

MIS Training (UK) Limited (MISTI/the Provider) is a privately-owned organisation which offers short courses of between two and five days in length in Audit, Risk Management, Security and Fraud and other related subjects.

The United Kingdom (UK) business is run by the General Manager, with delegated authority from the Provider's owner, Boathouse Capital, a private equity provider, based in Philadelphia, United States of America (USA), which acquired MISTI in April 2014. Staff at the Provider's Head Office in Massachusetts are responsible for the Human Resource and financial management functions of MISTI. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is based in the USA. The General Manager, who was appointed in October 2018, reports into the USA-based CEO. The General Manager is supported by a logistics officer and sales and marketing personnel whose roles cover Europe, the Middle East and Asia regions.

The Board of the organisation comprises the CEO, the Chief Financial Officer and representatives of Boathouse Capital partners. The Board's role is to oversee the activities of the international organisation and determine its strategic direction.

MISTI is based in Moorgate, in the City of London in a serviced office. Its courses are held in high-quality hotels in London.

The Provider's objectives are based on delivering high quality experiences for participants who work in the banking and financial sectors, enabling them to develop their careers or to specialise in a particular business area.

The General Manager has reviewed the functions and business model of the Provider since his appointment. More participants have enrolled during 2019, compared to the previous year and the General Manager is seeking to source ever better hotel accommodation in which to conduct the courses in the future.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Course provision ranges from introductory programmes in Internal Audit to more advanced programmes, such as a Fraud Investigations Workshop.

Participants are able to claim Continuing Professional Development credits for their courses, provided they satisfy the attendance requirements stipulated by the Provider. The credits are recorded with the Certification Service for Continuing Professional Development.

All courses are accredited by the National Association of State Boards in Accountancy in the USA. The majority of courses are public courses, although there is also in-company provision. MISTI works with around 200 companies, a small percentage of which are UK-based. The Provider has offered 54 public courses over the 2019 calendar year at different locations, including Amsterdam, Dublin, Dubai and Muscat, with the majority in London. The delegates on the London-based programmes come from outside the UK. This year, 464 participants have attended the Provider's programmes.

Three courses, Risk Management for Financial Institutions, the Fraud Investigations Workshop and Fundamentals of Internal Audit Training Week were offered during the inspection, all of which were conducted on a face-to-face basis. Each course comprised ten delegates, who were predominantly male. All participants are over the age of 18 years, with the majority comprising nationals from the Middle East, with two each from African and European countries.

Participants enrol by completing an electronic registration form, submitted via the Provider's website. Authorisation from the participant's company is required. The remainder of the enrolment process is completed

through electronic means, including Terms and Conditions and Joining Instructions. The latter are issued once the course has been assessed as viable by the Provider.

BAC accreditation covers MIS Training (UK) public course provision only.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one day. Both the course venue and the serviced office were visited. Discussions took place with the General Manager. Meetings were also held with the three trainers running the courses and with two groups of participants. Lesson observations were conducted for all three courses. Meetings were also held with the Logistics Officer and the Sales Manager. A wide range of documentation was reviewed as well as relevant online systems. The staff co-operated fully with the inspection.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Interim	2 December 2015
Re-accreditation	26 January 2017
Supplementary	23 May 2018
Interim	3 December 2019

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 General Manager was appointed in October 2018. While the nature of the courses has remained stable, there have been changes in the staff structure to reflect changes in the Provider's markets. An example of this is the appointment of a dedicated staff member to pursue in-company provision opportunities in order to compensate for the fall in participant numbers from European countries. Also, a new team member will be leading the sales function from mid-December 2019.

2. Response to actions points in last report

3.3 The Provider must fully implement its staff appraisal system so that all staff have their appraisal when it is due.

The General Manager reviews individual staff performance on a one-to-one basis regularly. However, staff appraisals had not yet been carried. The majority of appraisals will be carried out in January 2020, when all staff are available.

3.3 The appraisal procedures for the sales staff must cover all aspects of their performance and the full range of performance indicators and provide the basis for staff to reflect on their own performance.

The General Manager has completed the drafting of documentation for the sales staff appraisal process. This invites staff to consider their contribution to the business and to reflect on their past performance, as well as submitting ideas for their future objectives. The documentation is intended to ensure that performance indicators, relating to the strategic plan for all aspects of the business, including sales, quality improvement for courses, compliance and client satisfaction, are addressed.

8.2 8.3 The Provider must use the full range of data available to produce an annual report that provides clear actions for continuous improvement.

The General Manager has produced a review of the business and a strategic business plan to take the organisation forward. The review document covers the various dimensions of the business and evaluates its performance, specifying key areas for improvement, including target markets, course content, trainer evaluation and financial indicators. The review provides a solid foundation for future planning. A regular business risk review should be undertaken to assess issues impacting on the business, with appropriate mitigation strategies.

11.3 11.4 The Provider must introduce a developmental training session and observation system so that course directors can share good practice, which will enable them to continually develop their skills.

The General Manager observes trainers regularly, including new trainers prior to their appointment although these are not formally recorded. Trainers who work on specific types of courses, for example Internal Audit, observe each other to share best practice. Trainers also hold discussions about best practice and different pedagogical techniques with a view to improving their delivery within course teams. Trainers are also able to watch recordings of colleagues' presentations.

The General Manager is developing an observation template that he will use to evaluate training. This will be made available to trainers for their use. This is work in progress and the aim is to enable the collation of observation results, providing consistent feedback to develop trainers' skills.

In addition, there are video conferenced trainer meetings for the global faculty to exchange ideas and review programmes. These virtual meetings are held every two months, although not all trainers have accessed them to date.

17.5 17.7 *The Provider must ensure that there is a formal anti-discrimination procedure and appropriate arrangements for ensuring delegates are protected from the risks of radicalisation and extremism.*

Appropriate policies relating to discrimination and equal opportunities are contained in the Staff Handbook. Staff have been trained in recognising the risks of radicalisation and extremism. However, procedures for, and a risk assessment to assess how to mitigate the risks of extremism and radicalisation have not yet been developed. The trainers' handbook does not currently include policies for recognising the risks of radicalisation and extremism or the anti-discrimination procedure.

19.2 19.3 *The Provider must ensure that delegates are informed in writing of the MISTI and BAC complaints procedures, so that they are aware of how they can make a complaint.*

The Provider has an appropriate complaints policy with timelines. It references BAC's complaints policy. The policy is available on the website.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

MISTI is recommended to extend the data it collects to include the relative grading of course directors by delegates, in order to provide a more forensic and expansive overview of its performance.

The Provider's online system captures comprehensive data which is carefully analysed to assess trainers' ratings. Immediate follow up is undertaken if a trainer's ratings fall below a given level. Comparative ratings are available for monitoring purposes.

The Provider should consider introducing an appropriate method to enable delegates to evaluate their starting points and reflect on their learning at the end of the course so that they can evaluate the progress they have made.

The trainers review participants' learning through group work and question and answer sessions. At the end of a course, a final exercise or case study is set to embed learning and to provide an opportunity for the clarification of any issues that participants may have. Participants confirmed that they were actively encouraged to assess their progress and this is sufficient, given the opportunities for seeking guidance from trainers.

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

The General Manager is well qualified and experienced and has made improvements since his appointment in staff management and in areas relating to course provision. Data collection and evaluation systems have also improved.

Weekly team meetings, which are compulsory, take place as well as one-to-one meetings with each staff member every two weeks, conducted by the General Manager. As a result, communication is effective in ensuring that staff are aware of the priorities.

3.3 The Provider has not undertaken staff appraisals.

Recruitment processes are clear with requisite probationary periods. There is clarity within the staff team as to their roles, the functions of which are shared across the six executives, to ensure continuous cover

and administrative support at client facing events. The staff induction process is thorough so that staff are clear about their duties and the functions of the other team members.

Policies such as equal opportunities, behaviour and discrimination are covered in the staff handbook, which also contains a comprehensive data protection and data usage section. The data privacy policy could usefully appear as a link on the participant enrolment form.

The website is fit for purpose and provides accurate information on the range of the Provider's courses. Interested participants are invited to contact the Provider via telephone or e-mail to obtain further details on the specific details for each course.

The levels at which courses are pitched are stated, along with any pre-requisites relating to experience and participant language proficiency. Trainers noted that issues are rare in terms of participants being unable to fulfil the requirements for courses, as the sales team follows up applicants' queries during the registration process.

The attendance requirements are strictly imposed, given that in some cases, staff are requested to report on a participant's attendance record to their employing organisation. Attendance is a pre-requisite for the provision of Continuing Professional Development credits.

Feedback is obtained from participants electronically at the end of their course and their feedback is effectively captured via the online evaluation system.

Participants' issues and complaints raised during the course receive instant remedial action.

The General Manager has produced a review of 2019 and strategic objectives for 2020. The review includes action plans and ideas for generating greater client satisfaction and repeat business, improvements to course venues and building on the relationships with the trainer pool.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

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

Comments

Trainers are central to the success of the Provider. The General Manager ensures that appropriate trainers are allocated to the courses and that delivery is observed by himself or another member of staff. Trainers are well qualified and experienced and are recognised in their sector of expertise.

11.3 11.4 Trainer observation is not undertaken systematically or consistently.

The trainers are very experienced and deliver training sessions that are inclusive and interactive. They take account of the needs of participants and check that learning is taking place. The trainers are highly qualified and passionate about their subject and engage readily with their class to ensure that participants are keeping pace with the course. Trainers are also available in breaks to speak to participants and to address any questions they have.

Participants confirmed that they were satisfied with course materials. Inspection findings confirm this view.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

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

Comments

Participant welfare is provided by both staff and trainers. Staff are available at course venues in the UK to ensure that the course starts and proceeds without issues. They are on hand to deal with any problems that may arise.

The meetings with participants confirmed that they receive appropriate support and guidance from both staff and trainers in both administrative terms and on-site at courses. The General Manager attends most courses. Inductions take place at the beginning of courses at the appointed venues.

Policies recognising the risks of radicalisation and extremism and the anti-discrimination procedure are included in the staff handbook.

17.7 A risk assessment to assess the mitigation of the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation is not yet in place.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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

Comments

The Provider renews the lease on the serviced offices each year.

A general reception area, at the entrance to the building, provides secure access to the Provider's office space.

The office accommodation and the nearby meeting and breakout area are sufficient for the small staff team. The office is clean and in a good state of repair. Each member of staff has their own workstation.

A suitable breakout area is used for receiving guests. The heating and ventilation provision in the office is satisfactory.

Good quality hotels are used as venues for the courses. The hotel visited during the inspection was of a good quality and in a prestigious location. Break-out areas for participants and trainers are available in which they can relax and communicate with each other.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The Provider is well managed by the General Manager who is committed to quality improvement.

The trainer pool is a key asset in terms of its experience and engagement with the Provider.

Participant welfare and satisfaction have a high priority for the Provider and its staff.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

3.3 The Provider must ensure that staff appraisals are undertaken on a regular basis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
11.3 11.4 The observation template to evaluate training must be finalised and implemented and made accessible to trainers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
17.7 The Provider must implement an appropriate risk assessment process for the mitigation of the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

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

It is recommended that the General Manager reviews key business risks on a regular basis and assesses potential actions for mitigation of the risks.

It is recommended that trainers should attend the video conference trainer meetings to update them on changes to course content, developments in course delivery and key MISTI policies.

It is recommended that the trainers' handbook include policies for recognising the risks of radicalisation and extremism and details of the anti-discrimination procedure.

It is recommended that the Privacy Policy, which is included on the website, should be included in participants' joining instructions.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

It is recommended that course delivery premises are reviewed before classes commence to assess compliance with standard health and safety procedures and particularly to ensure that cabling for laptops is removed or made safe.