

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: London Stock Exchange Group Academy – London Campus

ADDRESS: 10 Paternoster Square
London
EC4M 7LS

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Ms Daniela Biagi

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 17 March 2020

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 21 May 2020

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

The London Stock Exchange Group Academy – London Campus (LSEGA/the Provider) provides training services as part of the London Stock Exchange Group. The London Stock Exchange is a publicly listed company in the United Kingdom (UK). The Provider offers courses in finance and investment related areas as well as other subjects such as corporate governance. Twenty-one of the LSEGA's programmes are accredited for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) purposes by the CPD Certification Service Limited.

LSEGA was first established in Italy in 2000. Subsequently, the London Stock Exchange's own training centre was set up in 2004. When the Italian Stock Exchange became part of the London Stock Exchange Group in 2009, the London training centre was merged with the LSEGA in Italy. LSEGA currently has two offices. One office is based in Milan in Italy and the other is in central London near Saint Paul's Cathedral. The Milan office is located within the Italian Stock Exchange and the London office is located within the London Stock Exchange. BAC has been asked to accredit the London office and its activities only.

LSEGA aims to design and implement training programmes that enable individuals to continue their professional development and companies to develop their human capital and grow their relevant skills base.

The Head of LSEGA is based in the Milan office and is responsible for the operations in Italy, London and internationally. She reports to the Chief Operating Officer of the London Stock Exchange Public Limited Company. The Head of LSEGA is supported by the Head of UK New Business Development, who is based in London and is, in turn, supported by a senior associate and associate, who manage the administration of the courses.

2. Brief description of the current provision

LSEGA in London offers public open enrolment face-to-face courses to individual delegates, whose attendance is usually funded by their employer. It offers 26 core courses that, in some cases, are repeated twice or three times in a year, up to a total annual offering of about 45 courses.

The main topics of the courses include investor relations, corporate governance, structure of the equity markets, technical analysis and trading on the London markets. Other new courses have been developed since the last inspection, for example in the area of environmentally sustainable finance. All these courses are offered face to face. The Provider also now offers an online course called Introduction to Financial Markets.

The public courses are short courses that normally last from a half-day to three days. The exception to this is the Financial Markets Masterclass, which is delivered in ten three-hour sessions per week.

The open courses are also offered internally for group human resources staff. The main courses offered internally are the Financial Markets Masterclass, Introduction to Equity Markets, Introduction to Post-Trade and Financial Modelling.

LSEGA also offers bespoke courses to corporate clients. The topics covered in the bespoke courses may be based on the content of an existing open course or may be developed specifically for the client. They are normally offered face to face. Highly customised courses are also offered to international clients in areas such as primary markets and technology and technological innovation.

BAC accreditation relates solely to the open enrolment face-to-face courses offered to external clients in the UK.

At the time of the inspection, there were no delegates registered as there were no courses running. The total capacity of the Provider is 429 delegates. The courses are offered according to demand. There are no specific entry requirements.

3. **Inspection process**

The inspection was carried out over one day by one inspector making use of remote online communication methods. The inspector carried out discussions with the Head of UK New Business Development, the Head of LSEGA, the Senior Associate and one of the Provider's trainers. A wide range of electronic documentation was also scrutinised as were photographs submitted of the new dedicated training space in the stock exchange building. The LSEGA staff co-operated very well with the whole inspection process.

4. **Inspection History**

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	14-15 February 2019

PART B – JUDGEMENTS 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

There have been changes at a senior management level and changes in the Academy team itself since the last inspection. The Head of LSEGA reports to the same staff member as previously but that staff member has now taken the role of Chief Operating Officer of the London Stock Exchange Public Limited Company. This has not changed the positioning of LSEGA which remains part of the London Stock Exchange Group Technology Division.

In the UK, the previous Head of UK Business is now Head of UK New Business Development with a greater sales and business development orientation. The Head of UK New Business Development is due to leave the Provider on 31 March 2020. A member of staff who was on maternity leave at the time of the last inspection returned to the Provider in April 2019 and left LSEGA in August 2019.

With regard to the course provision, a new online course covering financial institutions and types of investments has been introduced in response to demand for a less technical course about financial markets. The course is called Introduction to Financial Markets. The course is divided into 14 short modules of about 20 minutes' duration each. It is aimed at those who want to gain an understanding of financial markets because they may be interested in a career in the financial sector. It has been offered since August 2019 and is accredited for CPD purposes by the CPD Certification Service Limited. Twenty learners have undertaken the course since it was introduced.

Other new courses have been developed. These include Finance for non-Finance Managers as well as a range of courses covering environmentally sustainable finance. These courses include Environmental Social Governance for Investor Relations and Sustainability Finance.

Since the last inspection, five more of the Provider's courses have been accredited by the CPD Certification Service Limited.

From April 2019, LSEGA has occupied a dedicated training and office space in the London Stock Exchange building. The new training room holds up to 50 delegates. As a result, LSEGA is able to run more courses of different types and trainers can better facilitate group work and networking.

2. Response to actions points in last report

There were no actions in the last report

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider should maintain formal written records of its key meetings to ensure there is a clear audit trail of the discussions and the decisions taken.

The Provider maintains appropriate written records of its key meetings to ensure there is a clear audit trail of the decisions taken and that there is effective follow up. LSEGA uses a variety of meetings to facilitate communication and make decisions. The frequency and structure of the meetings have changed since the last inspection. Fortnightly meetings, involving staff from across the London Stock Exchange Group Technology Division, take place. The discussion includes a progress review of the tasks that individual staff have to complete in the following 15 days. The meetings are recorded and any additional tasks that are allocated during the meeting are recorded so that they can be discussed at the following meeting. As a result, there is a clear audit trail of the discussions and the decisions made.

There are also monthly meetings of the Provider's staff, including the Head of LSEGA based in Italy. As a result of these meetings, tasks are attributed to individual staff members and are recorded using a centralised electronic diary system. The system produces automatically generated reminders to ensure that there is effective follow-up and the actions are systematically reviewed at the next meeting.

LSEGA is recommended to put in place a formal process for ensuring its policies are maintained up to date in the future with specific review dates.

The Provider has introduced an appropriate formal process to introduce and update its policies and procedures. When a new process is agreed by LSEGA's team, a new procedure or policy is created. The new procedure or policy includes the identity of the author, the date of creation and a version number. The policies and procedures are updated when there is a change in the way a process is dealt with. When updated, the policy document is marked with the author of the changes, the date of the update and a new version number. A number of the administrative policies and procedures have been updated since the previous inspection. The documents are also reviewed annually to ensure that all changes have been made and that the policies and procedures remain up to date.

Plans should include measurable targets, based on the participants' feedback scores and overall assessment of their experience at the Provider to ensure continuous improvement across the provision.

Clear team objectives have been set for 2020. These include measurable targets relating to revenue, business development, business management and participant feedback. The objectives include a variety of relevant measurable outcomes connected with the participants' experience on the Provider's courses. An average overall numerical target has been set based on the participants' feedback scores with an aspiration to achieve above this target, year on year, to ensure high levels of quality are maintained.

The Head of LSEGA and the Head of UK New Business Development regularly review the average scores, which are rigorously analysed, as well as the qualitative feedback to assess if any improvement actions are required. Any scores falling below the target level lead to an investigation into the reason for this. As a result of these measures any issues are identified and appropriate action is taken to ensure continuous improvement..

The recently introduced formal training session observation schedule should be implemented effectively in order to maintain the quality of training, share best practice and ensure continuing improvement.

Formal recorded training session observations of new and well-established trainers are carried out. The observers include members of the Provider's team as well as external experts, including LSEGA's trainers so that best practice is shared effectively. The observations make use of a very good template to record the outcomes of the observation. The template enables the recording of a useful range of quantitative and qualitative feedback across a relevant set of criteria including the participants' learning and participation.

The observation records are reviewed by the Head of UK New Business Development. Where issue arise, these are raised with the trainer to seek to maintain the quality of the training. However, feedback is not provided systematically to trainers. There is also a system for aggregating the outcomes of the observations in order to facilitate a year-end analysis of the results for comparison purposes and to support continuing improvement.

The Provider should identify a suitable independent adjudicator and add this information to the complaints procedure.

A new complaints procedure, with clear timelines, has been developed. It includes a suitable adjudicator in the event that a complaint cannot be resolved by the Provider. It also includes an appropriate reference to BAC's complaints procedure.

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 Provider is effectively managed. The organisational structure is clearly defined and the Head of LSEGA, based in Italy, and the Head of UK New Business Development communicate well with each other to ensure the effective running of the organisation. They are suitably experienced and qualified and understand their roles and responsibilities well.

The head of LSEGA has a clear vision for the future of the academy. She is in the process of developing and planning alternative business lines such as online course delivery and the development of face-to-face courses in new topics and longer-term courses. She also has a focus on improving the marketing of the business.

There are effective channels of communication between the Provider's staff. These include a range of scheduled, recorded and highly structured meetings where decisions are taken and actions allocated. Key meetings include detailed information for the staff in the form of slides that set out the financial situation, planned activities and updates on projects including course development.

There are also regular one-to-one calls between the Head of LSEGA and the Head of UK New Business Development to ensure that both are up to date with the current priorities and the Provider's financial situation. Regular informal meetings take place between the Provider's staff in London who work closely together in the new administration office space. As a result, the staff are very aware of the current priorities.

The administrative team works well to ensure the effective delivery of the courses. Detailed administration procedure lists set out the steps that are required to register participants and set up courses to ensure consistency.

The staff have good opportunities to access training to develop their skills and knowledge. Managers discuss training with the administrative team members and will sign off suitable training interventions. Staff can suggest training that they would like to undertake and this will be supported by the business financially if it meets the business needs.

The Provider takes reasonable care to recruit suitable participants for its courses. Prospective delegates contact LSEGA online through a link from the website. They are also able to discuss their training needs with a member of staff to obtain fuller information to enable them to make informed choices about the appropriate course for them. Through the registration process, the Provider obtains information about their role and the level of the participants' existing knowledge. This information is shared with the trainer so that there is an awareness about how the course can be tailored appropriately. The registration process could be enhanced by specifically asking participants about their aims in attending the course to ensure the course will fully meet their needs.

There are effective systems to obtain participant feedback through formal questionnaires. The feedback is regularly reviewed so that appropriate action can be taken if any issues arise. However, there is no systematic method for the staff to discuss the feedback and to record any measures taken and their impact.

Overall, LSEGA is highly committed to continuous improvement and delivering a high-quality provision.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The development and management of the courses are carried out effectively for the benefit of the participants. The allocation of rooms for the training courses has become easier with the introduction of the dedicated training room. Trainers are allocated to the courses on the basis of their expertise and the structure, agenda and material for the courses are all checked by managers to ensure consistency.

There is a robust process for the development of those new courses which are judged to meet the demands of the market. Managers work closely with the trainers in the development of new courses and are open to their suggestions about what might be appropriate subject matter for new courses. New course outlines are tested with the market, including through information provided through the website. If there is sufficient interest in the course, it will be fully developed with the training material. LSEGA also benchmarks its provision against other providers in the market to ensure its relevance. The Provider also works closely with its trainers to keep course content up to date.

LSEGA has access to an experienced pool of trainers, many of whom have worked with the Provider for a substantial length of time. There is a robust approach to the recruitment of new trainers. This involves procedures that ensure that new trainers are both suitably experienced and are able to deliver the course content so that it fully engages the participants.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Participants receive appropriate pastoral support to meet their needs. All participants receive good levels of appropriate information before the start of their course. This is provided through the website and the provision of clear joining instructions that are sent prior to the start of the course. Participants are also able to contact the Provider's staff for any additional information needs prior to the course commencement.

At the start of the course appropriate information is provided to delegates as part of the course induction. The Provider's staff and the trainer are available throughout the course to answer any other questions that may arise. There is also a Stock Exchange security team, the members of which are available to handle any medical matters.

There are appropriate arrangements in place to protect participants from the risks of radicalisation and extremism. The training provided in this regard has also been extended to any new staff members.

The joining instructions include a clear statement about LSEGA's strict policy for dealing with any abusive, discriminatory or extremist behaviour.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The new dedicated training space in the London Stock Exchange building includes a spacious training room. The training room is very well decorated, furnished and equipped to a high standard. The equipment includes two screens, a lectern and a fixed projector. As a result of the size of the training room, the setting for the training can easily be adapted to better facilitate different training approaches such as group work.

The Provider's staff also have an improved administration area with new equipment and furniture. This provides a good working environment.

The participants receive very good guidance on health and safety. The guidance includes a new laminated version of the evacuation and safety procedures that is made available in the training rooms during the courses.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Very well committed staff who ensure that the courses are well run and administered.

A highly responsive approach to the continuous improvement of the quality of the provision.

Very well qualified trainers with excellent experience in their fields of expertise.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

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

LSEGA should consider establishing a system so that participant feedback, both positive and developmental, is provided systematically to trainers.

It is recommended that the registration process be enhanced by obtaining information from prospective participants about their aims in attending the course.

It is recommended that there are procedures in place to ensure that participant feedback is systematically reviewed and discussed within the team and any actions taken are recorded including their impact.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

--