



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

INSTITUTION:	ESAO Limited
ADDRESS:	8 The Drive Hove Sussex BN3 3JT UK
HEAD OF INSTITUTION:	Mr Alexandre Gelbard
ACCREDITATION STATUS:	Accredited
DATE OF INSPECTION:	3 December 2020
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:	Continued accreditation, February 2021

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

ESAO Limited (ESAO/the Institution) is a privately owned training organisation. The owner is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is based in London. The Institution was established in France in 1993, and teaching commenced in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1998. Most of the teaching and all student administration are undertaken at the main centre in Lisieux, Normandy, France, where there is also stabling and pastures. There are small teaching premises in Hove in Sussex.

The Institution offers diplomas in animal osteopathy and animal manual handling using osteopathic techniques. The students attend several placements at the Hove centre each year and teaching takes place in Hove for one week each month.

ESAO aims to train international students to become professionals who are able to treat a wide range of animals in countries across the world.

The Hove premises include three classrooms, a kitchen and an office. Practical sessions are held in several equine and small-animal centres close to the training centre. The osteopathy sessions are carried out by the students on stabled horses by mutual arrangement with the owners of these stabling centres. In return for the use of the facilities, there is an agreement whereby ESAO provides osteopathy services for the animals.

The CEO has overall responsibility for the development of the business and the quality assurance of the provision. He is supported by the General Manager, who is responsible for the day-to-day operational and academic management, and student recruitment and welfare.

Only the operations based in the UK are accredited by the British Accreditation Council (BAC).

2. Brief description of the current provision

The courses offered lead to diplomas in Animal Osteopathy and Animal Manual Handling. The awards are recognised by the Department of Work and the Veterinary Association in France. The courses are delivered in Lisieux, France, with regular short five-day placements in Hove for each year group.

The courses consist of face-to-face teaching and practical workshops in stables and riding schools and in a variety of registered veterinary practices. The core course modules also include blended and distance learning elements. Students can enrol on five-year or three-year programmes either full time or part time.

The courses run annually between September and June and are offered to adults who have completed the French Baccalaureate or an equivalent qualification. It is also possible to start a course in January if there are sufficient numbers for a second intake of students.

At the time of the inspection, there were 220 part-time students enrolled in France, with no students in the UK. Students mainly come from Europe, including France, Belgium, Switzerland and Italy. They come from a range of professional sectors, many have a veterinary background and are mostly over 20 years and female. They attend the courses in order to broaden their experience and supplement their practice. All students are over the age of 18. Class sizes are usually limited to groups of ten to 20 students at one time.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out remotely by one inspector over one day. Interviews were conducted with the CEO, the General Manager and the Director of Project Development. Documents were scrutinised and discussed during the meetings. The Institution was very helpful and co-operated fully with the inspection process.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	15 June 2002
Interim	9 December 2006
Interim	16 May 2008
Re-accreditation	12-13 September 2009
Supplementary	21 February 2010
Interim	18 February 2013
Re-accreditation	23-24 April 2014
Interim	19 May 2016
Supplementary	2 November 2016
Re-accreditation	17-18 October 2018
Supplementary	17 October 2019

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements 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 vast majority of theoretical knowledge units have been delivered online through the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The existing VLE has been greatly enhanced by the use of a digital education hosting platform and a high-quality suite of online resources. Practical lessons take place as either face-to-face or video lessons.

The Institution has significantly increased the range of online resources, as well as increasing the range and scale of printed dual-language teaching and learning resources. These include journals, publications and books. The aim of the online resources is to support the students to meet the course aims through supported and independent research and study. Teacher-led video lessons are either delivered live or through recorded video streaming.

Interest in the Institution's provision has been very high in 2020 and the number of students recruited has increased by 20 per cent in this academic year.

2. Response to action points in last report

8.2 The Institution must produce a yearly evaluative report based on all relevant sources of information.

The Institution's most recent evaluative report includes data on student numbers over a five-year period and student performance data. Reference is made to the quality assurance process, including an evaluation of the impact of moving the curriculum online, as well as evaluating teachers' digital skills. The report contains a summary of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plans put in place to support teachers to undertake their roles in an online environment. The report would benefit from a year-on-year comparison of the data to show trends over time.

8.3 The Institution must collate all agreed actions into an action plan linked to the areas for development identified in the report.

There is a suitable action plan that reflects the areas for development highlighted in the annual report. The plan is cross-referenced to the annual evaluative report and allocates responsibilities to the appropriate managers. However, it is currently too general and does not provide enough detail regarding the required outcomes or include specific and measurable improvement targets.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

There were no recommendations identified in the last inspection report.

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 Institution employs highly qualified and experienced staff. The organisational chart provides a comprehensive overview of the Institution's business and academic structure. There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities. As a result, the staff understand their roles very well and are effective in carrying them out.

The provision is underpinned by well-monitored policies and procedures that have been updated to reflect recent changes in delivery.

The introduction of a structured management information system has provided the CEO and senior managers with high levels of qualitative and quantitative information. The information includes accurate and robust quality assurance data, as well as outstanding levels of student performance information.

The Institution's website has been updated and provides an accurate reflection of the programmes and study pathways.

Entry requirements for the programmes are very clear and there are effective systems to support the course application process and to ensure the suitability of the applicant for their course. As a consequence, nearly all students complete their course and there are very high levels of engagement and student achievement.

Student attendance is effectively monitored as teachers update online registers for each class.

The systems for monitoring and managing quality assurance are highly effective, with regular reports generated, and scheduled management meetings and cohesive systems in place to ensure any issues are identified and addressed as appropriate. Management has been particularly effective in seeking the views of students and staff regarding the transition to online lessons and has responded promptly to any issues or concerns that have been raised.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

All courses are well managed and delivered in accordance with the curriculum learning objectives. Students are provided with well-developed course programme schedules. Effective academic oversight is undertaken by the headteacher and the academic management team.

Teachers are very highly specialised in animal osteopathy and veterinary practice and many are globally renowned experts. Lesson content is monitored for consistency and teachers are supported through individual or group support in the weekly teacher meetings.

Course assessment processes, including examinations, and progress monitoring are detailed in the course materials and annual study programmes. Students are able to monitor their own progress and achievement and are supported by regular reviews by their tutors.

The monitoring of students' progress is highly effective. Regular reports are produced that show the students' participation in the online sessions as well as their progress and achievement through individual units. These reports are closely monitored, with the aim of identifying any issues as quickly as possible. If any issues are identified, appropriate follow-up contact is made to check on the students' welfare as well as any study issues.

Students receive outstanding levels of support and guidance to enable them to progress into appropriate employment at the end of their course of study.

4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Student welfare is well managed by appropriately trained and experienced staff and meets the needs of the students very well. Students were effectively supported to manage and rearrange their travel arrangements to individual locations in line with government lockdown guidance.

The welfare of students is well monitored, including their attendance and general health and welfare. Prompt follow is carried out as required.

With the move to more online content, the Institution has revised its e-learning policy and there is now an appropriate designated member of staff as a point of contact for any issues regarding cybersecurity. Additional digital security has been put in place that includes issuing all students with an ESAO-registered e-mail address.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The UK premises and facilities were not operational at the time of the inspection because of the COVID-19 pandemic, so it was not possible to inspect them. Therefore, compliance is based on the findings of the previous inspection and no contrary indications were identified during this inspection.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Strong leadership, supported by clear policies, and well-organised systems result in very high standards.

Effective quality assurance management is embedded and makes excellent use of student and staff feedback.

The online curriculum is highly effective, with very high levels of student satisfaction and achievement.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High

Medium

Low

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

The Institution should include year-on-year comparison data on student recruitment, progress and achievement in the annual evaluation report, with the aim of improving the monitoring of the Institution's strengths and areas for development.

The Institution should improve its action-planning by identifying outcomes and including specific and measurable targets.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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