



## **BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT**

### **INTERIM INSPECTION (College)**

<b>INSTITUTION:</b>	OLC (Europe) Ltd incorporating EETTEC Ltd
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	66 Castle Street Bolton BL2 1AE
<b>HEAD OF INSTITUTION:</b>	Dr Chris Bamber
<b>ACCREDITATION STATUS:</b>	Probation accreditation
<b>DATE OF INSPECTION:</b>	14 January 2022
<b>ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:</b>	Continued accreditation, 24 March 2022

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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

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The Organisational Learning Centre (Europe) (OLC/the Institution) was established in 1998. It is a private college offering qualifications in a range of subjects in business and finance, computing, health and social care and education and training from Level 4 to Level 6. OLC became a limited company in 2002.

OLC has premises in Bolton, Manchester and London. Since the previous inspection, students have also been recruited to a new campus in Oldham. Training takes place in all four locations. The Institution also has links with City of London College to provide an OLC campus in Aldgate East in London. At the time of the inspection, no OLC students or courses were being delivered at this location. The main administration offices are based in Bolton.

OLC aims to help students achieve qualifications and to raise their aspirations and self-esteem.

Governance is provided by a Board of Directors and executives, including the Managing Director, who is also the Principal. The Principal is supported by a team of four Directors, including the London Campus Director.

The curriculum is focused on courses in business and finance, computing, health and social care, and education and training. Full time Higher National Certificate (HNC) and Higher National Diploma (HND) courses in Business and Healthcare Practice are provided through a partnership collaboration agreement with Sunderland College. In October 2020, OLC commenced a partnership collaboration with Newcastle College Group (NCG) offering Level 6 top-up degrees in Health and Social Care and in Business Management. In October 2021, OLC commenced a collaborative partnership with Tyne Coast College (TCC) as a subcontractor offering the full-time HNC in Computing (Network Engineering).

The Institution no longer offers courses in collaboration with the University Centre Colchester (UCC), or the University of East London (UEL).

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

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The Institution delivers full-time HND courses in Business and Healthcare Practice, which are accredited by Pearson. HND students are enrolled with Sunderland College and study at one of the OLC campuses in Bolton, Oldham or Manchester. Students studying the HNC Computing (Network Engineering) are enrolled with TCC and study at one of the OLC campuses in Bolton, London or Manchester.

Students are also enrolled on the full-time Bachelor of Science (BSc) Health and Social Care and Bachelor of Arts (BA) Business Management top-up degrees, accredited by NCG. Students attend in-person classes at one of the OLC campuses in Bolton, London or Manchester.

In addition, OLC has part-time students studying for a Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training at the Bolton campus, accredited by Pearson.

At the time of the inspection, 329 students were studying full-time HNC, HND and top-up degree courses. Six students were studying part time. All students are UK residents, and over the age of 18. The majority are female.

Students are enrolled at various times throughout the year with approximately three intakes a year. Students must meet published entry requirements for each course, which include a minimum level of prior achievement, or relevant work experience, along with relevant English and mathematics qualifications.

### **3. Inspection process**

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The inspection was carried out remotely by one inspector over one day. The inspection included scrutinising documentation and meetings with senior managers, tutors, students and the Managing Director. A virtual tour of the

Oldham premises took place. Observations of teaching and learning were also carried out. All staff co-operated well with the inspection and the information required was clearly presented.

#### **4. Inspection history**

<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Stage 2	22 July 2009
Stage 3	22 December 2009
Interim	16 August 2011
Supplementary	9 October 2012
Re-accreditation	15–16 October 2013
Supplementary	6 & 17 February 2014
Interim	13 November 2015
Re-accreditation	11–12 July 2017
Interim and Supplementary	1 April 2019
End of Probation Review	25 October 2019

## **PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

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*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**

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Since the previous inspection, OLC has opened a new campus in Oldham, Greater Manchester, available to students enrolled on the HND in Business and the HND in Healthcare Practice.

In October 2020, OLC commenced a partnership collaboration with NCG to offer Level 6 top-up degrees in Health and Social Care and in Business Management. This provides a useful progression pathway for students completing their HND qualification who wish to continue their studies with the Institution.

In October 2021, OLC commenced a collaborative partnership with TCC as a subcontractor offering a full-time Level 4 HNC in Computing (Network Engineering). The collaborative agreement is reviewed annually. At the time of the inspection, the Institution did not have validation in place to allow students to progress to the Level 5 HND. Managers have rightly recognised the potential limitations of this arrangement for students wishing to progress towards an undergraduate top-up degree. Senior leaders have completed a risk assessment to identify a range of other local providers to which students can transfer in order to complete their diploma, or a foundation degree, if validation is not achieved by the end of students' HNC qualification.

The OLC website promotes the Level 5 HND programme to prospective students. Managers made changes to the website during the inspection to more clearly reflect that this level of qualification remains subject to successful validation, to ensure that students fully understand the level of qualification they can currently achieve with OLC.

Senior leaders have invested significantly in a range of new equipment and learning resources to support students on the HNC in Computing (Network Engineering). These include new computing systems, a range of robotics and access to virtual cloud computing platforms. These resources allow students to develop and apply their practical programming, networking and database design skills.

A well-qualified and experienced Director of Management Information Systems (MIS) and Quality Standards was appointed in January 2022 to replace the previous roles of Director of Quality and Standards, and Director of MIS and Infrastructure.

Three new lecturers have been appointed since the previous inspection. All have relevant qualifications and vocational experience in their respective subject areas, including first and higher degrees, and relevant teacher training qualifications.

The Institution no longer offers courses in collaboration with UCC or UEL. This is not yet reflected on the OLC website however, where these former partners' logos still appear.

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

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*Managers must ensure that quality policies and procedures are updated to accurately reflect the revised systems for managing student registration information and attendance.*

The Institution has introduced clear policies and procedures to ensure the accuracy of student registration information and attendance data. Student withdrawals are processed by the relevant programme lead following implementation of published intervention, support and disciplinary processes. Completed withdrawal paperwork is copied to partner institutions, to ensure internal student records are consistent with franchise partner records. The updating of internal MIS also includes individual class registers and overall attendance records, to ensure these reflect actual and expected attendance.

In addition, the Institution has implemented clear procedures for the management, approval and recording of breaks in learning, withdrawal or intermissions. Students' requests are recorded in writing for consideration before being copied to partner institutions for evidence review, approval and processing. The outcome of any course intermission request is communicated to students via the Institution's internal communication system. The Institution's internal student list is updated centrally to ensure the enrolment status of each student is accurate.

The roles and expectations of individual staff members, in relation to data validity and integrity, are clearly outlined in policy documents and staffing matrices. This ensures there are clear lines of delineated responsibility for maintaining the accuracy of data and informing relevant partner institutions.

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

*It is recommended that the book stock at the Manchester campus is reviewed and refreshed to give students access to additional, more up-to-date information sources to support their studies.*

Students confirm that they have access to the learning resources they need, both in hard copy and digitally. The book stock has been refreshed and now includes a range of publications to support students on the new HNC in Computing (Network Engineering). In addition, students have access to a range of learning resources via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

*It is recommended that the effectiveness of student information systems is routinely checked, and quality assured, to ensure these are sufficiently robust to provide consistently accurate data.*

Staff complete regular checks on the accuracy of student information, including attendance, registrations, transfers and withdrawals. The accuracy of student information systems is reviewed regularly at both academic support meetings and management meetings. Managers also produce a range of reports to ensure data is accurate and collaboration partners have accurate data.

*The minutes of weekly operational meetings and associated action plans should be enhanced to provide a clear, detailed and specific record of follow-up actions to facilitate ongoing monitoring and improvement.*

Managers keep appropriate records of weekly operational meetings. Records identify those in attendance, matters discussed and clear action points. Records are systematically reviewed in follow-up meetings to ensure appropriate action has been taken.

### **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 has a clear management structure that all staff understand. The Managing Director is well supported by the Board of Directors and a team of senior leaders, who have clear lines of responsibility and accountability. However, very recent changes to the senior leadership team are not reflected in the organisation chart or on the OLC website.

Senior leaders and managers meet annually to review a range of performance indicators and identify future development opportunities. The business development plan provides clear educational direction for the Institution, helping to ensuring its strategic aims and goals are achieved.

OLC employs suitably experienced and competent administrators to ensure the effective day-to-day running of Institution. An effective system of annual staff appraisal and performance review is implemented. Staff are set

appropriate targets, supported by a broad range of relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities that help to enhance quality.

Students benefit from effective information, advice and guidance to ensure they are recruited to courses that meet their academic needs and personal goals. Publicity material, both printed and electronic, provides prospective students with useful information about the courses on offer, course entry requirements, and the study locations available.

Managers made changes to the website during the inspection to reflect that the HNC in Computing (Network Engineering) is still subject to validation and approval. The website now indicates that the Aldgate East campus in London is not currently delivering courses, as this is subject to recruitment of sufficient student enrolments. However, the website still includes features of the partners with which OLC no longer collaborates, for example UCC, or the UEL.

The Institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students. For example, students at each campus are invited to provide formal feedback following the completion of each unit of study. Data is collected and analysed in relation to the quality of learning materials, the relevance of the unit content, and the standard of teaching. Student forum meetings are also regularly conducted to gather feedback on a range of quality indicators, and to update students on the actions taken in response to their feedback. Managers systematically review feedback data and take appropriate action where necessary.

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

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

#### **Comments**

Effective oversight of teaching, learning and assessment is provided by a suitably qualified and experienced Director of Curriculum Studies. Classes are appropriately timetabled, and rooms allocated to meet the needs of students.

Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced to teach their subject disciplines. Teaching staff engage in regular peer observations to identify and share good practice. Managers complete regular observations of teaching and learning to monitor the quality of education and to identify support needs where necessary. Where areas for enhancement are identified, mentors are allocated to provide personalised support and guidance.

Teachers participate in a range of training events and skill-sharing workshops to maintain and enhance the standard of education, including classroom management, listening skills, formative assessment and assignment writing.

Teachers use a range of effective strategies to encourage student participation and to check their students' understanding of concepts and course content. For example, teachers ask students probing questions to explore their understanding of data analysis and different methods of research. Students are encouraged to work in small groups to develop their skills of critical analysis, where they discuss and debate different theoretical perspectives.

Students benefit from high levels of academic support, small class sizes and regular academic tutorials. This ensures students are supported in developing new knowledge, understanding and vocational skills, and understand how to meet the requirements of their formal assessments. Students are provided with effective support to develop their academic writing, use of information sources, and academic referencing skills. Students benefit from regular feedback that helps them to improve and make progress.

Teachers are well supported to understand and meet the assessment requirements of awarding organisations. Appropriate software is used to check the originality of students' assignment submissions. Teachers complete regular standardisation and moderation activities which ensure that assessment decisions are valid and reliable.

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#### 4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

##### **Comments**

A suitably qualified and experienced Director of Student Services provides effective oversight of student welfare and pastoral care. Students value the level of personalised support and guidance they receive from pastoral and welfare staff.

Students are able to access suitable welfare services and a financial support fund to support their well-being needs. A student-led social committee organises a range of fundraising social events, providing valuable opportunities for students to socialise and raise money for charity.

Effective arrangements and policies are in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Staff complete a risk assessment and regular online training to help them understand how to safeguard vulnerable people from being radicalised.

The Institution has a range of appropriate policies and procedures in place to avoid discrimination, and to promote diversity and equal opportunities.

Students understand how to make a complaint if required. They have access to a fair complaints procedure, including guidance on BAC's own complaints procedure. They also have details of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

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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**

Students have access to classrooms and other learning areas that are appropriate for the courses offered.

Following the previous inspection, OLC has entered into a lease agreement to hire meetings rooms at the Oldham Event Centre, which is based at Oldham Athletic Football Club. Meeting rooms are modern, clean and bright, and have attractive views of the football ground.

Students have access to washrooms, including accessible facilities for those with disabilities.

Students have the use of well-equipped meeting rooms for working and researching in small groups. Ample parking is available.

The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness.

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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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Teachers benefit from valuable CPD opportunities, training and mentoring support to maintain and enhance the standard of education.

Students benefit from high levels of personalised academic and pastoral support, which helps them to make progress, and to achieve and succeed.

### ACTIONS REQUIRED

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The Institution must update the organisation chart to ensure the current staffing structure is accurately reflected.

High    Medium    Low

OLC's website must be updated to ensure it provides an accurate description of the Institution's current collaborative partners.

High    Medium    Low

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

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It is recommended that a progression route for students following the Level 4 computing course be provided.

### COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have taken a range of steps to address the actions identified by the external fire safety review at the Manchester campus. New fire doors have been fitted throughout the premises, along with an upgrade of the fire alarm system. At the time of the inspection, external contractors had been booked to carry out an updated fire safety risk assessment, but this had not yet been completed.