



## **BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT**

### **INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)**

<b>PROVIDER:</b>	Wine and Spirit Education Trust (WSET) School London
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	International Wine and Spirit Centre 39–45 Bermondsey Street London SE1 3XF
<b>HEAD OF PROVIDER:</b>	Mr Richard Harding
<b>ACCREDITATION STATUS:</b>	Accredited
<b>DATE OF INSPECTION:</b>	29 September 2021
<b>ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:</b>	Continued accreditation, 25 November 2021

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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### **1. Background to the provider**

WSET School London (the Provider) is a private provider owned by the Wine and Spirit Education Trust (WSET). WSET is a registered charity. The Provider is based in WSET's premises near London Bridge station in south-east London.

The Provider offers a range of courses in wines and spirits for professionals in the hospitality industry, as well as to other interested participants. All courses lead to qualifications, for which the teaching materials, syllabuses and examinations used are developed and administered by two other departments of the overall WSET charity.

WSET was established as a charity in 1969, offering a limited range of courses and awarding qualifications. Since that time, its suite of qualifications has been expanded to include a variety of qualifications from Level 1 to Level 4 on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF).

The Provider opened in November 1969. It offers the complete range of WSET qualifications and is a testing ground for WSET developments. WSET School London also offers diploma courses in Dublin, Manchester and Edinburgh, with visiting educators from the Provider. BAC accreditation is for online courses and for in-person teaching at the London premises only.

The aim of the Provider is the promotion, provision and development of high-quality education and training in wines and spirits in the United Kingdom (UK) and internationally for those who are or plan to be engaged in the wine and spirit trade, and for the general public.

WSET has a number of departments, each with its own head, operating under an overall Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Its activities are overseen by a Board of Trustees. The Provider is a department within WSET and is managed by a Principal, who leads teams of educators and programme managers. These are supported by the Student Services Manager, the Resources Manager and the Wine Buyer. Central functions, including the management of Information Technology (IT), human resources, marketing and finance are undertaken centrally for the entire charity. The Principal of the Provider, who was appointed in August 2018, reports to the CEO and sits on WSET's Leadership Team.

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

The qualifications offered by the Provider are developed by WSET Awards, another arm of the WSET charity. WSET's Global Education Department develops textbooks, online courses and other teaching materials for use by approved programme providers, such as WSET School London.

Courses offered include the WSET Levels 1 to 3 Awards in Wines, WSET Levels 1 to 3 Awards in Spirits, WSET Levels 1 and 3 Awards in Sake, WSET Level 3 Novice to Professional Course in Wines, the WSET Level 4 Diploma in Wines and Spirits, and short accredited general interest or enrichment courses. A Level 4 Wine Educators' course is also delivered at the WSET premises under the auspices of the Global Education Department. This provision does not form part of BAC's accreditation.

The Provider's courses are delivered in English and vary in duration from one day to 24 months, with set start dates, and include evening and weekend provision. Courses are offered in person and online.

Classroom teaching is supported by online resources developed by WSET. The Provider also offers a limited range of courses through online and distance learning using WSET materials.

The majority of participants who attend the courses are from outside the UK. They come from China, Italy, Spain and France, and are all over the age of 18. Among participants, there are approximately equal proportions of men and women. At the time of inspection, 479 participants were taking a part-time course.

### **3. Inspection process**

The inspection was undertaken remotely by one inspector over a single day. Meetings were held with the Principal, three administrative staff, eight participants and four trainers. An online observation of teaching was undertaken. The newly refurbished floors were inspected, in addition to the existing floors, by means of a virtual tour. The Provider engaged well with the inspection.

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

<b>Inspection type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Full Accreditation	13–14 June 2011
Interim	3 July 2012
Re-accreditation	30 September & 1 October 2015
Interim	25 July 2017
Re-accreditation	18–19 June 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 provider.*

### **1. Significant changes since the last inspection**

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The Provider has now taken over all five floors of its premises, whereas previously part of the building was occupied by WSET Global. The new floors have been refurbished to a high standard specifically to support teaching, with the provision of a Diploma Suite and increased floor space.

The Provider has trialled, and will be offering, provision linked to beer during the coming academic year.

The Provider has moved to delivering online learning only.

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

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*17.7 The Provider must develop and implement measures to counter risks of radicalisation and extremism.*

The School Principal and Student Services Manager have completed appropriate training in the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. Trainers and other school members have been made aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. This has been done informally by discussion with them. However, no formal policies or procedures have been developed to support the management of the risks associated with radicalisation or extremism. No risk assessment has been carried out and no other staff or trainers have undertaken relevant training.

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

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*It is recommended that the management arrangements of the Provider within the overall charity are kept under review, particularly with respect to non-operational aspects.*

The School Principal is now a member of the Leadership Team for WSET Global. This gives the Provider greater visibility and status within WSET as a whole. This has allowed the Provider to inform and influence decisions taken by the overall charity and is an effective response to the recommendation.

*The Provider is recommended to give greater prominence to the requirement for English language proficiency in the pre-arrival application information sent to prospective participants.*

The website now indicates that a good level of English is beneficial. Given the profile of the participants, this information is adequate to ensure that participants without sufficient English language proficiency do not attend the courses. The Provider confirmed that no participants have attended courses with inadequate English language skills. Should a participant require specific advice or further information whilst attending a course, this is provided by the Student Services Team.

*The Provider should provide appropriate additional information for international participants.*

The Provider makes useful information available to support international participants on the WSET's website and with the participant's booking confirmation. The information available via the website is limited and largely focuses on the course of study. There is no specific guidance for international participants on how to obtain additional information should they require it.

### **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**

The Provider's internal structures are effective. They are well defined, publicised and understood by all staff. Participants were clear on whom to contact as necessary and felt that they were well supported. The Provider has managed the change to more online delivery of the provision well, using its existing expertise and systems to support this mode of delivery.

Staff meetings take place regularly for both academic and administrative staff. These provide a suitable and effective forum for discussing academic and organisational issues. Online tools have been developed and used well to facilitate effective communications.

The Provider's policies are now accessible online. Policies are clear and staff are familiar with how to access them. Additionally, key participant-facing policies, for example the diversity and equality policy, are effectively disseminated via the website.

Staff are appropriately qualified, with the appointment processes being effectively managed via the charity's Human Resources Department, which checks references and qualifications. Staff skills remain current, and performance is monitored via an effective annual appraisal and staff development review. Staff development needs are managed well, with a staff development budget to support them in updating their qualifications, for example to Master of Wine standard.

Promotional material on the website is comprehensive and provides an accurate description of the courses, their content, assessment and qualifications. Participants confirmed that they felt well informed before and during their study.

Participant surveys are undertaken for all awards. The results of these are considered by management and staff as part of regular staff meetings. Participants are encouraged to feed back on the positive aspects of the course, as well areas for potential improvement. Feedback has been used to make appropriate changes that have led to an improvement in participants' marks. Participants are provided with feedback on actions that have been taken in response to their feedback. This is done via meetings between participants and trainers.

Regular reports are produced that examine the success rates of participants. These are then benchmarked against other WSET delivery centres and action taken as 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**

Courses are effectively managed by the academic and support teams. Academic management of courses is undertaken by Programme Managers and an Events and Tastings Manager. They are supported by a Student Services Manager and an Examinations Manager, who provide participant-facing and support services.

Course management is effective and appropriate. For on-site delivery, appropriately equipped rooms are used, with specific rooms for wine and spirit tastings. Participants confirmed the appropriateness of the rooms, the timings and the general organisation of courses. Inspection findings confirm this.

Academic resources, for both in-person and online provision, are provided by the WSET Global Education Department, which also supports other WSET Global delivery partners. Additional supporting material is developed by the Provider to enhance course provision and to tailor it to the specific needs of the participants. This works well and ensures consistency of approach and standards across WSET's wider delivery partners.

Both in-person and online teaching use homework, mock examinations and discussions in addition to the guided study hours to provide an effective variety of study methods. All courses include tastings as an integral part of the course, either by attendance at the Provider or by guided purchase. The style of teaching is an interactive one, with formal delivery of knowledge immediately followed by a structured tasting of the wine or spirit, and discussions about the wine or spirit. Participants are encouraged to question and to make comments.

Individual trainers' teaching styles vary. The participants enjoy this aspect as it provides variety and maintains interest. There is a structured and interactive approach to teaching. This is both appropriate to the discipline and effective for participants' progress.

Teaching has a consistent focus on participant performance, with the provision of frequent formative feedback and references to the assessments to be taken. This happens both directly from the trainer and via mock examinations. These are effective and seen as effective by the participants.

A suitable reasonable adjustments policy is available and provides clear information about how the Provider supports those participants with specific needs. The policy is available on the website.

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#### 4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

There is no specific member of staff responsible for pastoral support. However, the Student Services Manager will provide support as necessary and refer participants to formal support if necessary. This is suitable and appropriate for the Provider and the profile of the participants.

The participant information section of the website provides a comprehensive source of information for participants prior to arrival. Additionally, the booking confirmation provides information on travel and accommodation.

Although much of this information is course focused, in practice it has been found to be effective in meeting participants' needs. Participants would find it useful to have an online pre-arrival forum to allow them to have peer discussions prior to starting the course.

Key welfare policies are clearly set out on the Provider's website. These are well written and appropriate.

17.7 Currently, the Provider has no published radicalisation and extremism policy or procedures, and except for two senior members of staff, no staff training has taken place. There is, therefore, the potential for radicalisation or extremism to remain unidentified and for no action to be taken.

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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**

WSET School has its premises within the buildings owned by WSET. Recently, two more floors have been refurbished to a high standard for teaching and are now used by the Provider.

Suitable entry security is provided by a full-time reception and security post, giving access to the buildings via a push-button entry system. All participants are required to sign into the building daily.

The buildings have appropriate signage for emergency exits, fire precautions and for individual rooms. Health and safety are well covered via the course induction for participants.

All facilities are bright, clean and well maintained. An ongoing programme of refurbishment means that all areas are appropriately maintained.

Most of the well-equipped teaching spaces are flexible in size, with movable partitions to accommodate different sizes of teaching group. Additionally, suitable rooms are available for assessments. Small rooms are available for meetings or for discussions with participants.

The recent refurbishment has allowed for the provision of more high-quality participant recreational and study space via the creation of a Diploma Suite. This area has desks as well as facilities for participants to collaborate and for continued tastings. Additionally, a new staff room has been created, providing a better and larger workspace for trainers.

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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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All courses are well organised and delivered, with corresponding high pass rates.

Participant satisfaction is high, as evidenced by end-of-course surveys.

The necessary move to only online learning has been embraced and built upon to provide enhanced support to participants studying remotely.

The refurbished premises provide a very attractive and appropriate environment to support participants' learning.

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

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17.7 The Provider must develop and implement measures to counter risks of radicalisation and extremism to include a policy, risk assessment and training for all staff and trainers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low
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**RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)***

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It is recommended that the Provider ensures the website provides clarity for international participants about how to obtain additional information.

The Provider is recommended to consider the provision of a pre-arrival forum for participants to discuss their course.

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

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