



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

END OF PROBATION REVIEW (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: London College of Style

ADDRESS: Suite 3
Dukes House
4–6 High Street
Windsor
Berkshire
SL4 1LD
UK

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Ms Wendy Elsmore

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 1 July 2022

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued probation accreditation, 22 September 2022

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

London College of Style (LCS/the Provider) is a limited company and privately owned college offering a range of courses in fashion, styling, beauty and photography, and online courses.

Teaching takes place in Russell Square, central London, in a building shared with other education providers. LCS' head office is located in Windsor.

LCS delivers industry-linked training that aims to transform individual ability, expand creativity and raise professionalism and expertise within the fashion, styling, beauty and photography industries.

LCS was established in London in 2010 and is owned by the Director of Sales and Marketing and one private investor. Oversight and management are provided by the senior management team, consisting of the Director of Sales and Marketing, and the Director of Education.

Since the previous inspection, the Provider has developed its online provision and has introduced several new courses.

2. Brief description of the current provision

LCS offers a variety of courses of varying lengths, ranging from one day to six months, with the majority running for three months. Courses are delivered in person in the Provider's central London premises as well as online. The online delivery currently forms the majority of the provision.

In-person courses include those in Make-up, Interior Design, Home and Interiors, Fashion and Runway and Beauty Make-up. Online courses include Colour Analysis, Influencer and Blogging, Fashion Sustainability, Social Media Branding and Fashion Writing. In-person and online courses are offered in Personal Styling, Fashion Styling and Photography. The courses lead to Foundation Diplomas, Diplomas or Advanced Diplomas.

Participants may choose to undertake industry placements. The majority of the placements consist of one- to five-day placements, where participants gain experience of a variety of clients and areas of the fashion industry. Diploma courses offer internships, careers guidance and support to gain employment. Participants on all the courses can achieve an LCS accredited award. Courses of more than one day's duration are modular in structure and are continually assessed.

At the time of the inspection, no courses were running, due to the summer break. LCS has a total annual capacity of 225 participants. The majority of participants are female and over the age of 18 years. A minority of participants are from the United Kingdom (UK). Other countries represented include India, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the United States of America (USA).

There are three enrolment opportunities a year, at the start of each academic term. Entry requirements are based on digital literacy and level of English.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted by one inspector over one day on the Provider's premises. Documents were scrutinised and meetings were held with the Director of Sales and Marketing and the Director of Education. The teaching premises were inspected. The Provider responded promptly to all requests for information.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	21 – 22 March 2012
Interim	25 March 2013
Re-accreditation	29 February & 1 March 2016
Interim	30 May 2018
Re-accreditation	3–5 March 2020

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 provider.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

Online provision has significantly increased to cater for participants' changing preferences. The online learning platform has been reviewed and updated to support this.

Courses to support women and help them launch businesses have been developed.

Two online networks, that are used to provide opportunities for interacting with industry representatives, have been set up on a social media platform. One network is provided for those studying online and one for in-person participants. This extends to participants once they have left LCS. The activities include guest speakers, who provide highly useful advice and guidance. The sessions with guest speakers are recorded so that they are available to access after the session. Consequently, participants are well supported in their studies and have opportunities to find work.

To support trainers delivering online classes, an online group, with instructional support on delivering effective online provision, was set up for trainers on a social media platform.

A marketing team has been brought in to identify and support new opportunities in order to help expand the business.

2. Response to action points in last report

1.5 LCS must devise a risk management strategy that includes financial planning to identify and address risks.

Detailed risk assessments have been developed. These include how to identify and address risks and, where appropriate, include related financial elements. Consequently, it is clear how the Provider will manage any risks that might adversely affect its business.

2.4 Policies and procedures must be reviewed to ensure their relevance to staff and they must be communicated to the participants.

Policies have been appropriately reviewed and updated to ensure their relevance to staff. They are communicated to participants in the participant handbook and online.

2.6 Participant and staff files must be kept up to date and must include all necessary documents.

All necessary documents are now kept up to date in staff and participant files.

3.4 The Provider must establish a system of staff reviews and formal teaching observations.

A system of staff reviews and formal teaching observations has been introduced. The reviews are detailed, helpful and supportive. Observations of teaching and learning take place twice a year and are having a positive impact on the quality of the classroom practice.

5.2 Language levels required for those whose first language is not English must be accurately specified.

Language levels are benchmarked to the Common European Framework of Languages (CEFR) levels. These are clearly shown on the website and in the downloadable course outlines. As a result, participants have a clear understanding of the English language levels required for those whose first language is not English.

5.7 The application form must ensure the clear identification of participants with special learning needs or disabilities.

A section on the application form now allows participants to disclose special learning needs or disabilities, and another section allows them to specify what these needs are.

6.1 The attendance and punctuality policy must be reviewed so that it is clear in specifying what the attendance and punctuality requirements are.

The policy has been reviewed and is clear about the importance of high levels of attendance and punctuality. However, it does not state the minimum expectations for attendance and punctuality, or the actions that may be taken if the minimum expectations are not met.

11.9 The assessment schedule must be revised so that the deadlines given are realistic.

The nature of the course delivery has been adapted to better accommodate the submission of assessed coursework. Courses are modular, so that learning takes place in the stages that are necessary to successfully complete an assignment. Sufficient spacing of deadlines is built in, so these are now more realistic and better support the effective completion of assessments.

16.7 A risk assessment in relation to radicalisation and extremism must be carried out.

A detailed and suitable risk assessment in relation to radicalisation and extremism has been carried out to ensure a safe learning environment.

16.9 The Provider must develop its system so that participant contact details and details of their next of kin are accessible off site and out of hours.

The system has been developed to ensure participant contact and next-of-kin details are accessible at all times.

18.3 Participants must be advised of BAC's complaints procedure.

Participants are suitably advised of BAC's complaints procedure in the terms and conditions and in the participant handbook.

21.5 Risk assessments for off-site activities must be carried out.

Detailed and appropriate risk assessments have been carried out for off-site activities to ensure the safety of these activities.

25.2 An area for teachers to prepare training sessions or mark work must be designated.

A large, well-lit room has been specially designated for teachers to prepare training sessions or to mark work, so contributing to a comfortable work environment.

25.4 LCS must identify how the premises can offer private meeting rooms for trainers and senior managers.

A quiet room has been identified as a private meeting room, which can be used by trainers and staff as required.

29.1 The level of digital literacy required on each course must be specified.

This is now clearly specified on the website for participants. Additional support is available for any participant who may have problems using the technology.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that the participant handbook is reviewed to include more helpful information.

The handbook has been reviewed and now includes more helpful information to support participants during their time in London and at LCS.

The Provider should expand the health and safety information provided to staff, participants and visitors.

LCS has included additional information relating to health and safety in the participant handbook, and appropriate information is available to staff and visitors.

The Provider is recommended to ensure that all materials on the learning platform can be downloaded for participants' use.

All materials are now downloadable by participants from the learning platform. This facility has effectively enhanced the flexibility in course delivery. Technical support is available to any participant who experiences any problems with downloading materials.

The technology system should be enhanced to provide better interactions with the participants relating to assessments.

An online platform has been introduced, allowing for live communication between trainers and participants. It is extremely supportive to participants who are completing their assessments and allows for the downloading, uploading or sharing of information. Consequently, participants are involved in a variety of interactions during which they can discuss their assessments.

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 management structure is clearly defined and is understood by stakeholders. Senior managers are appropriately qualified and experienced and are highly effective in carrying out their duties.

Clear communications channels between management and staff allows for the smooth running of the operation.

The office manager undertakes administrative duties effectively. This is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of LCS. Policies and procedures are up to date. However, the policies relating to special educational needs and disabilities are long and complicated, making them difficult to understand.

Data is stored securely at all times to protect privacy.

Staff recruitment is carried out effectively. Qualifications and the right to work are checked and verified before staff are employed. Staff are suitably interviewed either in person or via an online interview. This ensures the thoroughness of the recruitment process.

The website is easy to navigate and offers much detailed information. The information provided for all courses is up to date and clearly identifies start dates of courses and the fees. Consequently, prospective participants are able to make informed decisions.

Information provided to participants clearly states the entry requirements for courses, including English language level. Consequently, suitable participants are enrolled for courses.

6.1 The attendance and punctuality policy does not clearly specify what the requirements are, resulting in participants not being clear about what is required.

There are effective procedures for ensuring the quality of the provision. Formal feedback from participants is regularly collected for each course through a questionnaire. The questionnaire for in-person participants is sufficiently detailed, with much useful information gained to support quality enhancement. The questionnaire for online participants is shorter and less useful.

Feedback data is recorded, but is not routinely analysed, which reduces its impact on setting targets for quality improvement.

The annual quality improvement plan clearly identifies areas to be addressed, by whom and by when, in order to improve the quality of the provision.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

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

Comments

A suitably qualified, knowledgeable and experienced Director of Education is responsible for overall course delivery and is effective in ensuring the maintenance of the Provider's educational standards.

An online educational platform has been introduced and has had a positive impact on the accessibility of course materials, and communication between participants and tutors.

Trainers are all experts in their particular fields, ensuring the high quality of the course delivery and the resulting consistency in the knowledge and skills gained by participants on each course.

Courses are regularly reviewed, with trainers' comments informing any revision of the course content. Formal reviews of the whole provision take place annually to ensure courses reflect up-to-date industry knowledge and practice.

Trainers are offered a varied programme of funded internal and external Continuing Professional Development (CPD). As a result, participants benefit from the high levels of knowledge of the trainers. Staff development sessions ensure that trainers are able to respond to the different backgrounds of the participants, ensuring that the course content remains relevant.

During the courses, participants are continually internally assessed to ensure they are meeting the required standard. The ongoing feedback participants receive is effective in ensuring that they are aware of what they need to do to pass the course. This is highly effective in ensuring high levels of achievement.

Additional support for participants is available for those who need it. This includes drop-in sessions, access to trainers outside course delivery time, an online chat box and appointments with trainers. Consequently, any issues are dealt with promptly.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

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

Comments

The senior managers and the office manager provide appropriate welfare advice and support to participants.

Prior to starting their course, participants are provided with useful information on their course to further inform them. An orientation at the start of the course effectively guides participants in relation to the Provider and to life in London.

A suitable policy and effective arrangements are in place to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

The social programme offered is responsive to participant feedback and includes visits to places in and outside London that are of interest to the participants.

Suitable risk assessments support the safety of participants and staff attending off-site social activities.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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

Comments

The entrance to the premises leads directly to a receptionist. As a result, the entrance is suitably restricted and secured.

The premises are clean and maintained to a high standard, and accessible. The garden, adjacent to the cafeteria, is much used by participants. Consequently, the premises provide a comfortable and attractive working and learning environment.

Fire signage is excellent, indicating to participants and staff what to do in an emergency.

The reception area is spacious and provides a suitable area to greet visitors and to relax as do the many well-furnished common areas. Ventilation is excellent, as the windows in the building can be opened when required.

Training rooms are large and well equipped to support effectively the delivery of courses.

4.5 Online, Distance and Blended Learning (spot check)

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

Comments

Senior management have an excellent understanding of online learning, which has resulted in the introduction of a new learning platform to effectively support the delivery of online courses.

The recruitment of a suitably qualified manager for online delivery has greatly enhanced the quality of the provision. The online manager has informed the development of the online provision and is available promptly to address any issues that may arise.

Trainers have been effectively trained to be able to give good levels of support to participants relating to online delivery, if required.

4.6 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

FURTHER WORK TO MEET OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

6.1 The attendance and punctuality policy must be reviewed so that it is specific as to the attendance and punctuality requirements.

High Medium Low

FURTHER WORK TO MEET OUTSTANDING RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

None

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS REQUIRED

7.3 Feedback must be analysed to support quality improvements.

High Medium Low

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

It is suggested that the policies relating to special educational needs and/or disabilities are reviewed and simplified.

It is recommended that the same feedback questionnaire is given to online and in-person participants to ensure consistency of approach.