



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

INSTITUTION:	Le Cordon Bleu Ltd
ADDRESS:	15 Bloomsbury Square London WC1A 2LS
HEAD OF INSTITUTION:	Mr Emil Minev
ACCREDITATION STATUS:	Accredited
DATE OF INSPECTION:	18 July 2023
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:	Continued accreditation, 23 November 2023

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Le Cordon Bleu (LCB/the Institution) is a private educational institution located in Bloomsbury in central London in the United Kingdom (UK). It offers courses in the culinary arts and related disciplines. LCB is a limited company and is part of the international network of Le Cordon Bleu schools. The parent company is Le Cordon Bleu International BV, which is registered in the Netherlands.

LCB aims to inspire students to develop a passion for the culinary arts, wine and management under the direction of their Chef Instructors and lecturers.

The Institution is led by a team of senior directors, who report to a supervisory council that is a committee of Le Cordon Bleu International. The senior directors include the Culinary Arts Director/Head of School, the Finance Director, and the Sales and Marketing Director. The senior directors are supported by the Head of the Academic Department, academic managers, administrators and student welfare staff.

Le Cordon Bleu was founded as a culinary arts school in Paris in 1895. In 1933, a former student helped to open a school under the Le Cordon Bleu name in London. This was closed during the Second World War, but reopened after the end of the war, in Marylebone in central London. Since it was established, the international reputation of Le Cordon Bleu group has spread rapidly and it now has a presence in 20 countries, with 35 international schools, attended by 20,000 students a year. British Accreditation Council (BAC) accreditation is for the school in London only.

2. Brief description of the current provision

LCB offers a wide range of in-person and online programmes in culinary arts, wine, management and hospitality. The majority of courses are delivered over a period of three months.

The Diplôme de Cuisine is an integrated programme composed of three certificates at basic, intermediate and superior levels, each of which takes three months. Other integrated programmes are offered, including in Culinary Management, with internship pathway options that may take up to 15 months in total to complete. The Grand Diplôme is the most prestigious culinary qualification offered by Le Cordon Bleu, combining study of the Diplôme de Cuisine and the Diplôme de Pâtisserie. This accredited professional chef diploma can be completed in nine months of full-time study.

The Institution offers three degree programmes in partnership with Birbeck, University of London. These are a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Culinary Industry Management, a Master of Science (MSc) in Hospitality Innovation Management and a Master of Science (MSc) in Culinary Innovation Management. These degree programmes are not covered by the BAC accreditation.

LCB also offers short programmes of one day to two weeks across the year. These include programmes such as Wine Essentials, Cuisine Techniques and Mastering Macaroons.

At the time of the inspection, there were 399 full-time students and 39 part-time students enrolled. All students are aged over 18 years, and the majority are female. There are currently 57 nationalities represented, with the largest groups being from the UK, United States of America (USA), India, Hong Kong and China.

Students enrol in January, March, June and September each year and are required to have a level of English at an appropriate level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Enrolment for degree courses takes place in the autumn.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out on site over one day by one inspector. The inspector held meetings with the Culinary Arts Director/Head of School, the Head of Academic Department, the Head of Quality and Compliance and the Admissions Manager. Meetings were also held with a group of students and with the Head Cuisine Chef and the Head Pâtisserie Chef. Lessons were observed, and a wide range of documentation was scrutinised. A review of the premises was undertaken. The Institution was very well prepared for the inspection and gave full co-operation to the inspector.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	29–30 October 2008
Interim	1 March 2010
Re-accreditation	2–3 December 2013
Interim	27 July 2015
Re-accreditation	26–27 October 2016
Interim and Supplementary	7 December 2018
Re-accreditation	15–17 June 2021

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

Existing members of staff have been promoted to Head of Academic Department and to Admissions Manager posts as these vacancies arose.

Since the previous inspection, the Institution has launched a Diploma in Patisserie Innovation and Wellness.

2. Response to action points in last report

There were no action points identified in the previous inspection report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that the BAC complaints policy, and how to access it, is more clearly highlighted to students.

Full details of the BAC complaints policy are now contained in the text of the Institution's own complaints policy. The BAC complaints policy is available on the LCB website and in the student handbook. As a result, students report that they are aware of the BAC complaints policy and how to access it if needed.

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

LCB is very well managed by suitably qualified and experienced staff who support the quality of the provision offered and the overall aims of the Institution effectively.

The Institution's governance and management structure is detailed and supported with clearly documented job descriptions. The structure supports managers effectively in their day-to-day duties, with clear and detailed reporting structures that are fully understood by staff.

The senior directors and members of the supervisory council are highly effective in undertaking their monitoring duties, with senior directors having an in-depth understanding of the Institution. As a result, the Institution is well run, and high standards of education and student support are maintained.

Senior managers are well qualified, very experienced and highly effective in carrying out their duties. They understand their responsibilities well and have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the requirements of delivering high-quality courses in the culinary arts and related disciplines. As a result, they provide clear educational direction and are effective in ensuring that courses and their delivery meet students' and employers' needs and that the student experience is of a very high quality.

Communication is excellent and includes a wide range of effective methods. Regular meetings are held between managers and administrative staff and lecturers so that staff are kept up to date of any operational changes, as well as being able to ask any questions or raise any concerns.

Effective administrative support ensures that the day-to-day needs of the Institution and its managers are met. Administrators are well qualified, suitably experienced and, through detailed job descriptions, they understand their roles and responsibilities well. An appropriate number of administrators ensure that suitable policies,

procedures and systems are maintained and disseminated effectively across the Institution, and that data collection and security systems are effective.

The Institution is highly effective in recruiting and retaining well-qualified and experienced staff who have a wide range of relevant experience in the culinary arts, wine and management. Recruitment procedures are well developed and secure and ensure that all claimed experience and qualifications are appropriately verified before employment. Staff performance is regularly reviewed and includes formal appraisals and, where appropriate, lesson observations. The process includes the opportunity for self-reflection, and developmental plans are completed and used effectively to bring about improvement. As a result, staff report that they are aware of their strengths and areas for development and are well supported by the Institution.

The Institution's website is of a high quality and is well developed. It provides detailed and accurate information on the content of the available courses. Text and images used in publicity material are accurate and provide a fair reflection of the Institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered. Information is regularly updated to ensure accuracy and is very effective in supporting students to make informed decisions about their courses. As a result, students report that they are well informed about their course, London and LCB before arriving at the Institution.

Student attendance, retention, completion and progression rates are excellent. Procedures for monitoring and reviewing the Institution's performance are highly effective and take into account a wide range of relevant key performance indicators. A comprehensive process of self-evaluation ensures that leaders and managers are aware of the Institution's strengths and areas for improvement. Data is collected and analysed to identify action points for any improvement. An annual report is compiled that includes data analysis. Student feedback is used well to improve their experience, and students are well informed of the actions taken as a result of their feedback.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Programme management and course development are excellent. The members of the academic management team are very well qualified and highly experienced, providing effective oversight of the content, delivery and development of the curriculum. As a result, courses are well planned and regularly reviewed to ensure that the course content and materials are up to date and meet the changing needs of the students and the culinary and wine industry.

Systems to ensure that classes are timetabled with appropriate rooms and teachers for the nature and practical requirements of each of the Institution's courses are well developed and ensure a consistent learning experience for students.

Chefs and teachers are very well qualified, highly experienced and have an in-depth understanding and knowledge of their subject and the culinary industry. Lessons are well planned and delivered in ways that support the development of students' skills and their future assessment. Students actively participate in classes and are able to develop their knowledge and skills very well. The Institution is well resourced and provides excellent facilities and materials for the chefs, teachers and students to fulfil the requirements of the courses.

A detailed schedule of assessment for each course is made available to students and teachers in writing well in advance of the assessment date. Outcomes from each assessment are carefully monitored and used very effectively to identify students who are not making the expected progress. Each student is made aware of their progress against prior agreed targeted levels of achievement, with the Institution providing prompt additional support where appropriate. Students receive appropriate assessment feedback.

Chefs and teachers make themselves available outside class time to answer questions and clarify points to ensure understanding. Students commented on how helpful this is and how much they appreciate this support.

4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Staff members responsible for student welfare are well qualified, experienced and supported effectively by chefs and teachers in relation to issues relating to the students' courses and assessment. They are appropriate in number and are clearly highlighted to students during their induction session. Students report that they are very well supported.

Staff providing student support are appropriately trained and accessible to all students to provide advice and counselling, with chefs, teachers and external guest speakers providing careers advice.

On arrival, students receive a comprehensive induction. As a result, they fully understand the requirements of their chosen course, the Institution's key policies and procedures, and LCB's high expectations for attendance and punctuality. Students are made aware of the support available in case of an emergency. In meetings with students, they reported that they are highly satisfied with the information provided by the Institution and the range of support provided by staff. Inspection findings confirm this view.

Arrangements to protect students from the risks of radicalisation and extremism are good. There is a clear policy relating to preventing radicalisation and extremism and discrimination and abusive behaviour. Staff have been appropriately trained and a detailed risk assessment has been carried out.

International students are provided with detailed advice and practical information before travelling to the UK, which helps them to settle into their studies quickly. Further advice and support are available throughout their course of study.

The application form makes clear the Institution's fair and transparent terms and conditions. An appropriate complaints procedure is included in the student arrival pack and discussed during induction. Reference is made to BAC's complaints procedure. As a result, students are well informed about what to do if they have a complaint.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

LCB is located in central London, with buildings and facilities that provide an excellent and safe environment for students to learn and staff to work. The Institution's premises are held on an appropriate lease.

The premises are very secure, well maintained and in an excellent state of repair, decoration and cleanliness. Access to the premises is restricted to holders of swipe cards, with a barrier entry from the reception area.

Well-developed procedures ensure the safety of students and staff. General health and safety guidance is provided to students and staff during their induction and to visitors on arrival at reception. Students are clearly briefed on the equipment they will be using during the courses, and observation of health and safety by students is monitored throughout.

Comprehensive signage throughout the premises ensures that staff and students know where to go in the case of an emergency evacuation. Classrooms, demonstration areas and kitchens have evacuation routes and procedures that are clearly signposted.

Classrooms, demonstration areas and kitchens are very well equipped, with excellent resources and facilities. Each student has access to their own work area in kitchens, with industry-standard resources available. As a result, classrooms, demonstration areas and kitchens are equipped to a level that allows for the effective delivery and assessment of each of the Institution's courses.

Teachers have a suitable space in which to prepare lessons, mark work or relax. The cafeteria on the ground floor provides a suitable environment for staff and students to consume food and to relax.

Students have good access to space and suitable facilities for private study, with an appropriate student area and good Information Technology (IT) resources.

Students and staff have appropriate access to storage for personal possessions.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Highly effective leadership successfully guides the Institution and supports continuous improvement of the provision.

Excellent teaching is highly effective in supporting students to make progress and preparing them for their assessments.

The Institution has been successful in recruiting very well-qualified teachers with appropriate experience in the culinary industry, which supports students' learning.

Well-equipped premises and facilities provide a safe and comfortable environment that supports learning effectively.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

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

None

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:

Nigel Chambers

Lead Inspector