

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

College Reaccreditation Inspection

INSTITUTION: The Gemmological Association of Great Britain

ADDRESS: 21 Ely Place
London
EC1N 6TD

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr James Riley

DATE OF INSPECTION: 11 and 12 November 2013

ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION: Accredited

DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:

- Reaccreditation to be awarded for the full four-year period.
- Decision on accreditation deferred.
- Accreditation to be withdrawn.

Date: 5 Dec 2013

1. Background to the institution

The Gemmological Association of Great Britain (Gem-A or the Institute) is a Limited Company and registered Charity. Established in 1908 as a steering committee of the National Association of Goldsmiths, its teaching programme began in 1912. The Institute's objectives are to advance the art and science of gemmology, particularly through education and training. Gem-A has a worldwide presence and its place at the forefront of its field is underpinned by its current, close cooperation with the Foreign Office in the development of international ethical industry standards.

Gem-A is the longest established provider of gemmology education in the world. Its programme is tailored towards both enthusiasts from the general public and those working in the jewellery industry. Graduates can apply for membership of Gem-A by becoming a Fellow of the Gemmology Association and over 50% of its graduates take up this option.

The principal changes since the BAC Interim Inspection in 2010 include the acquiring of new premises, a change in Head of Institute, the development of blended learning courses and the addition of a Diamond Diploma ODL route.

The Head of Institute, who is also its CEO, has been in post since July 2012 and has held previous posts as Chairman and as a trustee. He has extensive industry experience and his responsibilities include finance and quality assurance as well as representing Gem-A to the public, day to day administration of the charity, overseeing organisational development and ensuring awarding body compliance. The Director of Education holds a part-time post, and has not only gemmology qualifications but an educational background which includes a Postgraduate Certificate in Online and Distance Education. She has senior posts in Gem-A since 1996 and is responsible for academic policy oversight. This includes oversight of the international network of Accredited Teaching Centres (ATC) which provide Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and blended learning course management. The IT component of ODL course delivery is managed by a specialist IT Manager. All tutors have both gemmology qualifications and a high level of industry experience. Tutors on on-site courses are supervised by a Teaching Manager whilst those on blended learning and ODL courses within ATC are monitored by a specialist ODL Tutor Manager. Gemmology qualifications are also held by 80% of the administrative staff and this ensures that continuous teaching cover can be provided in the event of a tutor's absence.

Gem-A is headed by a Board of Directors whose 11 members are elected by Gem-A membership. A Board of Examiners meets twice yearly and issues raised by this board are addressed by an Awarding Organisation Review Panel which is chaired by the CEO. Actions arising from this are addressed by the Board of Trustees. A Unit and Rules of Combination Panel (URoC Panel) also meets twice yearly.

Student numbers have increased considerably over the period since BAC Accreditation was achieved in 2009. At that time numbers stood at 166 and for 2013 they total 342, indicating a 69% increase. Numbers on blended learning courses total 10. The success in attracting students onto ODL courses has been significant and numbers, over the same period, have increased from 30 to 227.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The programme focuses on the properties of coloured gems and diamonds and each course includes both theory and practical experience. The Institute maintains class sizes at a maximum of 20 and its commitment to providing a range of courses which respond to student demand has ensured that it remains at the forefront of international education within its field. Blended Learning and ODL students attend one of the network of 36 international Accredited Teaching Centres (ATC), or through support provided by an Approved Practical Provider (GAPP) of which there are currently six within the UK and 15 worldwide. ATC and GAPP providers are established following the preparation of an International Compliance Summary Report which assesses tutor qualifications and a centre's suitability for administering coursework and providing examination facilities.

The wide variety of study routes available demonstrates the high value Gem-A places on tailoring its courses to its students' needs and since 2013 includes blended learning courses, combining on-site study with study using the same ATC and GAPP provision used by ODL students. Programmes are industry-focused, with regular careers support provided by industry experts, and graduates use their qualifications to gain employment, enhance their careers or go on to further study. Over recent years graduates have been successful in achieving places on the BSc (Hons) Gemmology and Applied Mineralogy one-year course at Kingston University.

Gem-A is an awarding body and its courses, which run at NQF levels two to six, are regulated by Ofqual. The Gemmology

Foundation course is a pre-requisite for study of the Gemmology Diploma. The level four Integrated Gemmology Foundation and level 6 Diploma can be taken in either an Accredited Teaching Centre (ATC), on-site in London in a day or evening route, or by blended learning which combines distance learning with daytime, on-site attendance. Students on daytime courses have one day per week attendance and those on evening courses two evenings attendance per week. The Gemmology Foundation is offered as an on-site, evening route, running over four months, twice a year or a day time mode which runs over four months. The ODL Gemmology Foundation course has nine different routes which include 'fast-track' mode and each includes a three-day Foundation Lab Class which can be taken at an ATC, GAPP or at the London study centre. The level six Gemmology Diploma is offered as an evening, on-site route, running over 12 months with two classes per week, or as a daytime class, running over twelve months, with one class per week attendance. A fast track, on-site mode is also offered over four months with five classes per week. A Further ODL mode has six attendance modes with three day Diamond Lab Classes. The level five Diamond Diploma is offered on a basis similar to the Gemmology Diploma, with fewer permutations but which, in 2013, included an ODL mode. A series of 11 five day Diamond Grading and Identification courses are held in Birmingham and London. A three day Advanced Diamond Grading course is offered for those who have successfully completed the Diamond Diploma or the Diamond Practical Certificate. A level two Gem Basics Award (Distance Learning) course was launched in 2013 although there are no students currently on the course. A series of 11 one day gemmology workshops, directed towards those with advanced gemmology experience, are held annually in Birmingham and London.

Gem-A is currently contributing curriculum development and teaching on a new BSc Gemmology at Birmingham City University and future plans include a programme of postgraduate courses at the university. Students on blended Learning and ODL programmes are allocated a dedicated, on-line tutor and the Institute's intranet system, based on Moodle, includes a dedicated student forum. Monitoring of both the forum and student/tutor interaction on Moodle is managed by the ODL Tutor Manager who demonstrated that systems used are highly sophisticated in providing learning support.

3. Inspection process

The inspection took place over two days. Two inspectors had meetings with the Head of the Institute, the Director of Education, the Accounts Manager and the Education and Examination Manager. Interviews also took place with the ATC and Accreditation Manager, and with full and part-time academic staff. The inspectors observed two classes and met with students from two different courses.

4. Inspection history:

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	1 and 2 October 2009
Interim	14 December 2010

PART B - JUDGEMENT AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

INSPECTION AREA - MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

1. The institution is effectively managed

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 1.1 | The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, trustees or governing body. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.2 | The head of the institution and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 1.3 | There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments _____

2. The administration of the institution is effective

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 2.1 | Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.2 | The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.3 | The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.4 | Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.5 | Data collection and collation systems are effective. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments _____

3. **The institution employs appropriate managerial and administrative staff**

- 3.1 There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff. Yes No
- 3.2 Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment. Yes No
- 3.3 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The current staff review system for ODL tutors is extremely robust, and this requires that they sign, on an annual basis, a Tutor Declaration confirming that they are aware of ATC Procedures and have no conflict of interest.

4. **Publicity material, both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the institution and its curriculum**

- 4.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered. Yes No
- 4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The website and printed prospectus both include comprehensive information about courses and facilities and include fees information and an application form. This includes a requirement to outline any special learning need.

5. **The institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable students for its courses**

- 5.1 Entry requirements for each course are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective students. Yes No
- 5.2 A formal application process ensures that students meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified. Yes No
- 5.3 Students are properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses for which they apply, and all application enquiries responded to promptly and appropriately. Yes No
- 5.4 Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated. Yes No NA
- 5.5 Students receive a proper initial assessment which includes language ability to confirm their capability to complete the courses on which they are enrolling. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The management of applications and enrolment of both UK and ODL students is centralised at the Institute and agents are not employed in the process. Applicant information is subsequently registered with their local ATC. Applicants are carefully advised on the study mode which is suitable for them and the Institute takes care to ensure, for instance, that an applicant in full-time employment can fulfill the study needs of a course. Entry requirements, which do not stipulate a level of prior learning, include IELTS 6 although blended learning and ODL students are assessed on a case-by-case basis. Gem-A course documents, for all courses, are in English although the major publication, the Course Notes, which students value highly as their learning 'bible', is also available in four other languages and future translations planned include Mandarin.

6. **There is an appropriate policy on student attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it**

- 6.1 There is a clear and published policy on student attendance and punctuality, requiring that they attend at least 80% of their scheduled classes. Yes No NA
- 6.2 Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all students, collated centrally and reviewed at least weekly. Yes No NA
- 6.3 Student absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Attendance records taken in class are monitored by the ATC and Accreditation Manager and these showed that an 80% attendance level is being achieved by the Institute.

7. **The institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary**

- 7.1 The institution has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner institutions and employers) on all aspects of the institution's provision, including formal student representation where appropriate. Yes No
- 7.2 Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis. Yes No
- 7.3 The feedback is reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary. Yes No
- 7.4 There is a mechanism for reporting on the institution's response to the feedback to the student body. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

7.4 The Institute should ensure that it develops a method for informing students of actions taken following student feedback.

8. **The institution has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement**

- 8.1 There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the institution's performance. Yes No
- 8.2 Reports are compiled at least annually which present the results of the institution's reviews and incorporate action plans. Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates. Yes No
- 8.3 Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to the management. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Existing quality assurance mechanisms should be developed further to provide a year on year analysis of learner satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates.

INSPECTION AREA - TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

9. Academic management is effective

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 9.1 | There is a suitably qualified and experienced academic manager or academic management team with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.2 | Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.3 | The allocation of teachers to classes provides for a consistent learning experience. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 9.4 | There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures for the acquisition of academic resources. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

10. The courses are planned and delivered in ways that enable students to succeed

- | | | |
|------|--|---|
| 10.1 | Courses are designed and delivered in ways that allow students to develop the knowledge and skills which will be required for final examinations or assessments. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.2 | Lessons and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.3 | Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.4 | Students are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.5 | Full-time courses requiring students to attend for 15 hours or more per week are time tabled over at least three days. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.6 | Any required coursework and revision periods are scheduled in advance. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 10.7 | The academic backgrounds and particular needs of students are taken into account in the classroom delivery of the course. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The design and development of delivery study routes, which include both day and evening, and blended learning and ODL delivery demonstrate an excellent level of commitment by the Institute towards ensuring that courses respond to both UK and overseas students' learning needs.

11. **Teachers are suitable for the courses to which they are allocated and effective in delivering them**

- 11.1 Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Yes No
- 11.2 Teachers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skill which allows them to deliver the content of courses effectively. Yes No
- 11.3 The appraisal procedures for teaching staff incorporate regular classroom observation. Yes No
- 11.4 Teachers are supported in their continuing professional development and enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the learning of students. Yes No
- 11.5 Teachers respond to different learning needs of students where appropriate, taking various learning styles into account in their planning and delivery of lessons. Yes No
- 11.6 Teachers employ effective strategies to involve all students in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Student comment confirmed that their tutors demonstrate a high level of industry experience, that class delivery is highly supportive of their learning and that the courses provide an excellent basis for them to achieve success in their careers.

12. **The institution provides students and teachers with access to appropriate resources and materials for study**

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

13. **Students receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, which are effectively monitored**

- 13.1 Courses are planned to include a schedule of assessments, the procedures and criteria for which are available in writing and in advance to students and teachers. Yes No
- 13.2 Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of students who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate. Yes No
- 13.3 Students are made aware of how their progress relates to their targeted level of achievement. Yes No
- 13.4 The institution takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating and other misdemeanours, and to penalise offenders. Yes No
- 13.5 Additional support or advice on alternative courses is provided to students who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed. Yes No
- 13.6 Oral and written feedback is given to individual students on a regular basis, tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery. Yes No
- 13.7 Students have appropriate access outside class time to teachers or personal tutors for academic support. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Oral feedback is provided within classes and following assignments and class observation demonstrated this as being effective in supporting learning. Feedback to ODL students by their ATC tutors, using Moodle, was demonstrated as appropriate and helpful. It is recommended that the Institute considers developing a system of written feedback for on-site students.

Student handbooks include reference to malpractice although the Institute does not have a discrete plagiarism policy because the Institute considers that the theory element of examinations does not require complex text of the type which could be plagiarised. Processes are in place to reduce the potential for malpractice by ODL students include the requirement to sign a document confirming that the individual submitting work for assessment is the same as the person registered on the course.

14. **The institution offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies wherever appropriate**

- 14.1 For courses leading to the award of a UK degree, the institution has a formal agreement with a recognised UK degree-awarding body. Yes No NA
- 14.2 For courses leading to other UK awards, the awarding body is recognised by the relevant regulator. Yes No NA
- 14.3 For courses leading to the award of an overseas degree, the institution has a formal partnership agreement with the overseas degree-awarding body, which is itself accredited by a recognised national agency. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

15. **There is a clear rationale for courses leading to unaccredited or internal awards**

- 15.1 There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the NQF/QCF and evidence that students who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level. Yes No NA
- 15.2 There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study. Yes No NA
- 15.3 External moderators are involved in the assessment process where appropriate. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments _____

16. **There are satisfactory procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment**

- 16.1 The institution complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration. Yes No NA
- 16.2 For internal awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration, and clear procedures for students to appeal against their marks. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments _____

Project Assessment Record Sheets demonstrate that assessment criteria are clear and the grading structure clearly explained. Within the two Diploma and Gemmology Foundation courses formative assessment takes place following coursework assignments, whilst summative assessment occurs after the final examination. The Institute has a published Examinations Procedures Handbook and the process is monitored by the Education and Examination Manager. Final examinations for both on-site and ODL courses run to a strict, international timetable to reduce the risk of malpractice. External examiner reports confirmed that Institute standards of assessment are satisfactory and these reports form the basis of quality assurance management.

17. **There is appropriate provision of advice for students intending to proceed to employment or higher/further education**

- 17.1 Students have access to advice from appropriate staff member on further study and career opportunities. Yes No
- 17.2 If the institution offers courses preparing students for higher education, they have access to prospectuses and to advice from a designated staff member both on selecting courses and institutions and on the application process. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments _____

INSPECTION AREA - STUDENT WELFARE

18. Students receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances

- | | | | |
|------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18.1 | There is at least one named staff member responsible for student welfare who is suitably trained, accessible to all students and available to provide advice and counselling. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.2 | Students receive appropriate advice before arrival. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.3 | Students receive an appropriate induction and relevant information upon arrival. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.4 | Students are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 18.5 | The institution has policies in place to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

An extensive induction programme is in place and on entry students receive a handbook which is comprehensive and clearly presented, so that international students are made fully aware of all aspects of their study programme. Applicants, all of whom are over 18 and the majority mature students, join Gem-A courses from positions in the jewellery trade or from the general public.

19. International students are provided with specific advice and assistance

- | | | | |
|------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 19.1 | International students receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and staying in the UK. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 19.2 | International students receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 19.3 | Information and advice specific to international students continues to be available throughout the course of study. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 19.4 | Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations. Where possible, students have access to speakers of their own first language. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

20. **The fair treatment of students is ensured**

- 20.1 Students apply for and are enrolled on courses under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions. Yes No
- 20.2 Students have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course. Yes No
- 20.3 Students are advised of BAC's own complaints procedure. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments _____

21. **Where residential accommodation is offered, it is fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised**

- 21.1 Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to the needs of students. Yes No
- 21.2 Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted where students under 18 are accommodated. Yes No NA
- 21.3 Clear rules and fire, health and safety procedures are in place, with appropriate precautions taken for security of students and their property. Yes No
- 21.4 A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of students. Yes No
- 21.5 Separate accommodation blocks are provided for students under 18. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments _____

22. **Where home-stay accommodation is organised, the welfare of students is ensured and the institution's relationship with hosts is properly managed**

- 22.1 Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation which both provides a safe and comfortable living environment for students and is appropriately located for travel to the institution and back. Yes No
- 22.2 Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before students are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the institution. Yes No
- 22.3 The institution has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision. Yes No
- 22.4 Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and students before and during the placement. Yes No
- 22.5 Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for student feedback and prompt action taken in the event of problems. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

23. **The institution provides an appropriate social programme for students and information on leisure activities in the area**

- 23.1 Students are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation at events and other leisure activities which may be of interest. Yes No
- 23.2 The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of students. Yes No NA
- 23.3 Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability by the majority of students. Yes No NA
- 23.4 Any activities organised by the institution are supervised by a responsible representative with suitable qualifications and experience. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met NA

Comments

A programme of social and cultural events takes place annually. This was suspended for over six months in 2013 during the period of the move to new premises but is to be reinstated in 2014..

INSPECTION AREA - PREMISES AND FACILITIES

24. The institution has secure possession of and access to its premises

24.1 The institution has secure tenure on its premises. Yes No NA

24.2 Where required, the institution has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The lease on the Institute's former premises having lapsed, the Institute purchased the freehold of 21 Ely Place in London which is a prestigious six story building close to Hatton Garden, the traditional centre of the jewellery trade. The move to new premises was completed in the summer of 2013.

25. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff

25.1 Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured. Yes No

25.2 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness. Yes No

25.3 There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories), made readily available to students, staff and visitors. Yes No NA

25.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to students, staff and visitors. Yes No

25.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information. Yes No

25.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of students and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors. Yes No

25.7 There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness. Yes No

25.8 There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Security is maintained by a sign-in system which is monitored in the reception area. A lift from the ground floor to the basement allows access by mobility-impaired staff or students to a basement classroom to which a class can be relocated if necessary.

26. **Classrooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered**

- 26.1 Classrooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them. Yes No
- 26.2 Classrooms and any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each course. Yes No
- 26.3 There are facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required on each course. Yes No NA

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The provision of specialist equipment for gem stone study is of an extremely high standard. The Institute currently has a total classroom capacity for 64 students in four, very well equipped classrooms, located in the basement, ground and second floors of its premises. Classroom facilities are of a high quality and technical equipment, such as 'diamond proportion analysers' are industry standard. Students can apply to use the world-class library of over 7000 specialist, reference books as well as having general access to a smaller library of key texts.

27. **There are appropriate additional facilities for students and staff**

- 27.1 Students have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private study, including library and IT resources. Yes No
- 27.2 Teaching staff have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation. Yes No
- 27.3 Students and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate. Yes No NA
- 27.4 Students and staff have access to storage for personal possessions where appropriate. Yes No NA
- 27.5 There are individual offices or rooms in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings. Yes No
- 27.6 Administrative offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the institution. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Staff use of a kitchen is provided. Students do not have eating facilities in the Institute but do have easy access to local cafes and restaurants which are open during the day and evening.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C - SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Numbering of action points aligns with that of the minimum standards

MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

Institution's strengths

- The educational management of courses, including ODL, is thorough and the Institute is forward looking in relation to the international market in this specialist area of education.
- Gem-A's place at the forefront of Gemmology education and industry practice is underpinned by its current level of cooperation with the Foreign Office related to the development of international ethical industry standards.
- The Administrative team, many of whom also hold Gemmology qualifications, is effective in all aspects of marketing, student registration and monitoring of attendance and performance both within on-site courses and ODL courses.
- Staff work effectively as a team to ensure continuous and high quality teaching and learning.
- Student comment confirmed that the teaching quality is high, the industry experience of tutors is excellent and classes are well presented.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
7.4 The Institute should ensure that it develops a method for informing students of actions taken following student feedback.	<input type="radio"/> High <input checked="" type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Institution's strengths

- Recent developments of the programme to include blended learning and a new ODL Diamond Diploma course underline the importance the Institute places on providing courses which respond to student needs and ensure that Gem-A remains at the forefront of international educational provision within this industry.
- The balance in courses between practical and theory elements is suitably industry focused.
- Student comment confirmed that their tutors demonstrate a high level of industry experience, that class delivery is highly supportive of their learning and that the courses provide an excellent basis for them to achieve success in their careers.
- The current system of a primary tutor being supported by a secondary tutor in class was demonstrated as being very effective in supporting learning, aiding peer observation and disseminating good practice.
- The extensive Course Notes document provides an exceptionally high-quality study resource for students in all learning modes.
- Systems used for the management of recruitment and induction of tutors, across all of the Institute's learning centres, are comprehensive.
- A commitment to quality enhancement is demonstrated through the decision to adopt next year a more formal tutor appraisal and feedback system which will be linked to formal class observation.
- Learner support is enhanced by students taking timed, sample, past examination papers, which introduces them to the Gem-A examination system and supports learning.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None.	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

STUDENT WELFARE

Institution's strengths

- Systems in place for student support, including in the case of special needs, are comprehensive and very effective.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None.	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

PREMISES AND FACILITIES

Institution's strengths

- Classroom facilities provide students with a high quality teaching environment.
- Staff offices are well equipped and suitable as an environment for both full and part-time staff in which to work, mark exams and prepare lessons.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None.	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- It is recommended that the website and printed prospectus could be enhanced by the inclusion of visual reference to the learning environment.
- It is recommended that a system for academic document standardisation is developed which may include reference to date of origin and authorship; greater cohesion could be achieved.
- It is recommended that the Institute keeps under review the current situation whereby the theory element of assignments taken by either on-site or ODL students are not screened against possible plagiarism.
- It is recommended that the Institute considers developing a system of written feedback for on-site students.
- Existing quality assurance mechanisms should be developed further to provide a year on year analysis of learner satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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