



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER:	London School of Business and Finance – Executive Education
ADDRESS:	2 Bunhill Row London EC1Y 8HQ
HEAD OF PROVIDER:	Karina Kizhner
ACCREDITATION STATUS:	Accredited
DATE OF INSPECTION:	6 November 2023
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:	Continued accreditation, 28 March 2024

1. Background to the provider

London School of Business and Finance - Executive Education (LSBF EE/the Provider) was formed, as a separate division of the London School of Business and Finance (LSBF), in 2008. In 2014, LSBF became part of Global University Systems (GUS), which owns and/or manages over 36 universities and other education providers across the world. As a result, LSBF EE is also part of GUS.

Only LSBF EE is included within the scope of this inspection and British Accreditation Council's (BAC) accreditation.

LSBF EE is an independent provider of executive short courses and non-credit-bearing postgraduate qualifications. LSBF EE offers unaccredited internal awards in management, finance, marketing and leadership and related areas. It has full independent control of all the education and quality assurance aspects of its provision.

The Provider's offices and training venues are located in central London in the United Kingdom (UK). LSBF EE's London campus is based within the University of Law's premises in central London and LSBF EE delegates have access to the reference facilities of the University of Law and the British Library.

LSBF EE aims to prepare the global business leaders of tomorrow for leadership, excellence and success. The Provider aims to provide high-quality executive education, using industry practitioners, to a discerning clientele. The main guiding principles of the organisation are participant focus, employability and innovation.

LSBF EE's core team is headed by the Managing Director (MD)/Vice Rector. The MD is supported by the Business Operations Manager, the Academic Director, the Business Development Manager, the Project Manager and the Delegate Support Officer. The MD reports to the GUS Board. All faculty members are part-time tutors who are also industry practitioners.

The GUS group provides LSBF EE with business support services, including Human Resources (HR), premises, marketing, maintenance, health and safety oversight, Information Technology (IT), international participant recruitment, admissions and course design.

There have been some staff changes. The MD has been in place since the summer of 2020. In February 2023, the new role of Dean for LSBF EE was introduced. This expanded position of the Dean includes the responsibilities previously held by the Academic Director of LSBF EE. This organisational structure is to promote a more strategic approach for LSBF EE overseen jointly by the MD and Dean.

2. Brief description of the current provision

LSBF EE is a short-course provider offering programmes ranging from postgraduate certificates and diplomas and Master of Business Administration (MBA) programmes to management and leadership programmes as well as short courses. Programmes last for fewer than 12 weeks, with the exception of the Postgraduate Diploma, which lasts for two semesters each of 12 weeks. The programmes cover the subject areas of marketing, management, finance and strategy.

Programmes are organised on a modular basis so that participants can choose modules to suit their individual needs. None of the programmes offered is externally accredited or subject to external awards, but they are recognised for the purposes of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). LSBF EE is a member of the CPD Certification Service (CPDCS). Participants are given a certificate of attendance or a certificate of completion by LSBF EE so that they can claim CPD accredited points awarded by CPDCS.

In 2020, all the Provider's courses were changed to live, online courses. In April 2022, the Provider went back to campus-based and hybrid delivery of its courses.

There were 42 participants enrolled at the time of the inspection. Most participants are from the UK, but there were also participants from other countries, including Argentina, Turkey and Thailand. Equal proportions of male and female participants are recruited. All participants are over the age of 18.

All courses have pre-defined entry requirements and enrolment information. For example, the Postgraduate Certificate in Management and the Leadership Development Programmes require participants to hold an Undergraduate degree or equivalent Higher Education qualification with English level B2 for English. These are clearly stated on the Provider's website and the programme application forms. There are three terms a year, starting each January, May and September.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out on site over one day by one inspector. The inspector met with the Dean, the MD, the Administrator and the Head of Quality Assurance. The inspector also met with other academic and non-academic staff and administrators. Meetings took place with teaching staff and participant representatives. A tour of the premises was carried out, and lessons were observed. Online administrative systems, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and participant and staff records were also reviewed. The Provider co-operated fully with the inspection.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	12–13 October 2016
Interim	28 November 2017
Re-accreditation	19 & 22 April 2012
Interim	10 May 2022

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

A new MD was appointed in the summer of 2020. In February of 2023, the role of Dean for LSBF EE was introduced. This expanded position of the Dean includes the responsibilities previously held by the Academic Director of LSBF EE. There is also a newly appointed Head of Quality Assurance. These appointments are to promote a more strategic approach for LSBF EE.

2. Response to action points in last report

7.4 LSBF EE must ensure that all stakeholder feedback is reviewed by management and effective action is taken to remedy deficiencies as promptly as possible.

LSBF has taken appropriate action to meet this requirement, which is now met.

Completed surveys, participant and staff interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, workshops, class observations and regular feedback are obtained and reviewed in order to evaluate the provision and bring about improvements. Participant achievement data is analysed and used to manage and improve the provision. Action plans indicate clear, realistic targets, indicating ongoing evaluation of quality.

As a result, LSBF EE ensures that its processes are effective and efficient in monitoring and assessing the standard of its provision with a view to continuous improvement.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that all completed classroom observation sheets are signed both by the observer and the tutor being observed.

This recommendation has been adopted. Tutor observation, feedback and professional development sheets for all tutors are signed by both the observer and the tutor being observed.

LSBF EE should ensure that its school monitoring reports provide action plans to address deficiencies identified and that such action is reported to management.

This recommendation has been met.

The annual monitoring report shows a set of actions that are either proposed or ongoing. Actions effectively address deficiencies and meet specific goals. The purpose of these reports is to keep the Teaching and Assessment Committee informed of continuous improvement. Thus, management is able to exercise appropriate oversight of the provision.

It is recommended that completed lesson plans are reviewed to ensure that they are sufficiently explicit to direct participants to specifically appropriate recommended reading relating to the programme's intended learning outcomes.

This recommendation has been adopted.

In the nine lesson plans reviewed for this inspection, recommended reading material, texts and internet links are clearly defined. These specifically relate to the programme's intended learning outcomes.

LSBF EE should consider stating explicitly the status of its postgraduate programmes, with regard to their carrying no postgraduate-level credit points, on its website and in its publicity materials for clarity.

This recommendation has been fulfilled.

LSBF EE's website has been updated to state explicitly that the Postgraduate Certificate (PGC) and Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) programmes do not carry any credit.

The Provider is recommended to carry out a regular periodic review, that includes external scrutiny, across all its postgraduate programmes and that such a policy be adopted in LSBF EE's quality assurance processes. LSBF EE should ensure the regular, ongoing and consistent implementation of its external review of postgraduate programme assessments.

This recommendation has been fulfilled.

Internal verification and external scrutiny are conducted termly. Moderation paperwork follows LSBF EE's regulatory framework, as set out in its quality manual. Verification clearly identifies scrutiny by the assessor to identify learning outcomes against assessment criteria for all postgraduate programmes.

External assessor feedback on moderation is detailed and developmental. The quality manual outlines LSBF EE's annual cycle of evaluation, assessment, teaching observations and appraisals as well as timelines for the implementation of action plans for evaluating performance and tackling weaknesses.

LSBF EE should ensure that the cleanliness of the toilet facilities is maintained when in-person teaching resumes.

This recommendation has been fulfilled. Toilets and all learning areas are effectively maintained in a clean and tidy state.

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

LSBF EE is effectively managed. There is a clearly defined management structure with a highly qualified and experienced senior management team in place. LSBF EE's goals are clearly communicated to all staff and other stakeholders via the staff and student handbooks, the quality manual, and the online teaching and learning management system. Appropriate risk management strategies, that are outlined in the quality and performance review manuals, indicate that there is a consistent approach to promoting best practice.

Administration is effective. Administrators have been in their role for a long time and understand their specific roles and responsibilities well. Ongoing in-house training is provided to ensure organisational efficiency. Data collection and collation systems are well documented and used effectively to set priorities for the future. Staff and participant handbooks are comprehensive, covering appropriate disciplinary, grievance and appeal procedures.

A robust staff recruitment procedure is in place, with experience and qualifications verified using disclosure checks, and references undertaken prior to employment. When recruiting new staff members, LSBF EE posts advertisements on job boards to collect a pool of eligible candidates. Once the candidate's Curricula Vitae (CVs) are received, a shortlist is created based on the suitability of their qualifications and experiences.

LSBF EE then offers an interview to the shortlisted candidates. Depending on the position, candidates might also be asked to perform a teaching demonstration or provide additional application materials. Once a candidate has been selected, they undergo appropriate safeguarding and data protection training. A

suitable member of LSBF staff holds an orientation focused on familiarising the new recruit with the relevant policies and procedures and best practice.

Staff appraisals include a review of past performance and future development needs. Regular class observations include checks on tutors supporting wider learning outcomes and equality, diversity and inclusivity. CPD records are up to date and indicate that support for staff is provided where appropriate.

Publicity materials, both printed and online, provide an accurate description of the provision. Text and images in the publicity material show the location and range of programmes accurately.

LSBF EE's website and application form are detailed to ensure participants' needs and expectations are met. The application form requires prospective applicants to state any special educational needs and/or disabilities they may have. Wherever possible, LSBF EE accommodates these needs by making appropriate provision with a support plan. An inclusive practice handbook provides guidance on the processes and responsibilities of staff and is used as a reference manual for all departments that have responsibility for supporting participants.

The policy on participant attendance and punctuality is appropriate, with effective procedures in place to enforce it. It is communicated to participants during their induction and is also available through the participant handbook and the online learning system. Participants interviewed confirmed that they understood the policy and procedure.

Systems to monitor and assess performance with a view to continuous improvement are good. Feedback from participants and other stakeholders is obtained regularly. This is recorded and reviewed by senior managers. Action plans and targets are set. These show how provision will be developed and implemented, following the findings.

A self-evaluation report is used as part of reviewing performance on a regular basis. Performance reviews are also highlighted in the quality manual, which clearly outlines the roles of different operating committees with a view to enhancing the quality of provision and promoting best practice. Participants interviewed confirmed that they have received information in response to their feedback, where action has been taken by LSBF EE management. Inspection findings confirm this view.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

All classes are timetabled appropriately in co-ordination with the central room-booking system operated by GUS. Details of the classrooms, showing courses and teaching sessions, are displayed in the reception area and on noticeboards for in-person delivery.

Course delivery is consistent across all the provision, with the same tutor being allocated. A classroom observation of each tutor takes place at least twice a year and is conducted by an academic team member. Feedback is provided to inform the tutor's staff performance and development review. In this way, senior management and tutors can identify strengths as well as weaknesses that need to be addressed. Class observation forms indicate that appropriate CPD is offered to tutors on an ongoing basis.

Programmes on offer are appropriate for the aptitudes and language capabilities of the participants. Feedback from external experts, industry partners and participants is considered when reviewing the content of courses, ensuring that these are appropriate to meet participants' practical needs in pursuing their careers and future employment. Lesson plans and schemes of work are detailed in order to provide a coherent course of study, with a variety of interesting and useful activities to meet participants' needs. This confirms LSBF EE's goal of enabling participants to build on what they have already achieved before commencing.

A pre-course questionnaire is sent to each participant to identify their expectations of the programme. Their answers are analysed and passed to the relevant tutor. By doing this, the tutor is able to tailor the materials and content, as far as possible, to meet participants' expectations.

Tutors are highly skilled and have appropriate skills, experience and qualifications in relevant sectors to allow them to deliver the programmes effectively. In a lesson observed by the inspector, the tutor was able to stretch and challenge participants by using extension activities. She was also able to respond sensitively to the different cultural backgrounds and support needs of participants. The observed teaching session involved discussion in pairs and individual work with active participation, demonstrating ongoing involvement of all participants.

Participants commented positively that they receive detailed feedback on their coursework and assessments, which enables them to progress from their starting points. Tutors give both written and spoken feedback to participants, which helps them to gain confidence. Owing to the small class sizes, tutors can provide individual attention and therefore, if required, are able to take prompt action in cases where participant progress needs intervention or further monitoring.

Realistic deadlines are set and communicated well in advance to participants, and any required coursework and revision periods are scheduled in advance. This was evidenced in the scheme of work and lesson plans seen by the inspector.

Participants interviewed were aware of the plagiarism policy, confirming that they are made aware of the policy at induction, during an academic writing workshop and via their handbook. Participants said that they are very happy with the support, advice and guidance they receive from their tutors.

There is a clear rationale for courses leading to unaccredited or internal awards. Participants confirmed that the internally assessed and externally moderated certificate of completion was accepted as part of further study in their place of employment. Industry specialists are involved in course content and design, which ensures that module material is current and set at an appropriate level.

Participants confirmed that they can discuss further study or career development with tutors or senior management. In addition, they have access to LSBF EE's careers adviser. Inspection findings confirm this to be the case.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

There is a dedicated staff member with relevant experience who is responsible for participant welfare. She has undergone appropriate training to be able to provide effective support and guidance in accordance with the needs of the participants.

Information about welfare support is published in the participant handbook and included in the induction programme. The information includes out-of-hours emergency contact details. The policy on welfare is reviewed and updated regularly. Participants are fully aware of the guidance and support available at LSBF EE. Participants confirmed that they had received adequate support, which had enabled them to make informed decisions about the suitability of the provision to meet their needs.

Appropriate policies on harassment, bullying, including cyberbullying, and abusive behaviour are available through the learning portal and are included in the participant handbook.

Effective arrangements are in place to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. These include policies, procedures, risk assessments and ongoing staff training.

The welcome and introduction e-mails provide international participants with relevant advice before their arrival in the UK. The participant handbook and enrolment communications are detailed and give an accurate description of the support available. The induction programme for participants from outside the UK is comprehensive and addresses their specific needs.

Information and advice specific to international participants continues to be available throughout their course of study. Additional support is provided by tutors and welfare staff as necessary. Support staff are available for all participants during the period of the programmes. They provide advice on life in the UK for those who require it. The participants also confirmed that support provided is sensitive to cultural and linguistic diversity. Inspection findings confirm this to be the case.

Fair and transparent terms and conditions are available to participants on the Provider's website and on the application form. There are appropriate refund arrangements which incorporate an appropriate cooling-off period. Participants were aware of these terms and conditions.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

LSBF EE has secure tenure on its premises. The lease allows LSBF EE to occupy appropriate classroom space, administration space and additional rooms if necessary.

There are full-time security staff at the entrance to the building. As a result, access to the premises is appropriately secured and the security arrangements for the outside area and buildings are good. All visitors report to reception, sign in and are given a visitor lanyard.

The premises are very well maintained, with the on-site maintenance team attending to any required repairs appropriately. The premises are very well decorated and maintained to a very high standard of cleanliness.

There is a comprehensive health and safety policy, and appropriate health and safety guidance is provided to staff, participants and visitors. The policy covers the responsibilities of management, first-aid arrangements, and fire and personal safety, as well as general staff risk assessments and guidance.

The signage, both inside and outside the building and in all rooms, is excellent. Fire emergency, floor and exit plans are on display on all notice boards throughout the building on all floors and in all rooms.

Circulation space for staff, participants and visitors is excellent. On every floor there are breakout areas with comfortable seating. Heating, lighting, sound insulation and ventilation in all classrooms, corridors and other parts of the building are of a good standard.

Toilet facilities on every floor, for both male and female participants, are sufficient and allow access for those with special needs and/or disabilities. There are notices in every toilet area indicating the date and time it was last cleaned. The rota indicates that these areas are regularly cleaned several times a day.

Training rooms have the latest technological equipment to facilitate in-person and online blended and hybrid forms of delivery. Equipment, such as interactive boards and cloud-computing facilities, is provided in every classroom. There are also digital tools to implement immersive experiences using text, images, audio and video, as well as projectors, whiteboards and flipcharts in every classroom.

Tutors have access to personal space for marking work and for relaxation. There is a dedicated staff area that is well equipped with comfortable seating, a kitchenette and locker space and areas for general circulation. Designated areas are set aside for quiet and rest times.

Breakout rooms are available on every floor, where participants can relax, socialise and consume food and drink. There is a cafeteria in the building that is open all day, selling a range of cold and hot food and drinks. Water coolers and dispensers are provided on every floor in the building.

LSBF EE can secure additional room space if necessary for trainers and management to hold private meetings. However, the current administration office space is of sufficient size and well-resourced for meetings.

Participants confirmed that they were extremely satisfied with the services, premises and support they had received from LSBF EE personnel. They were very complimentary about the facilities.

4.5 Online, Distance and Blended Learning (spot check)

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

Comments

The MD and senior staff are well qualified and sufficiently experienced to manage the online provision. They are effectively supported by an Academic Director, a Business Development Manager, a Project Manager and a Delegate Support Officer. This enables courses to run efficiently, with technical issues resolved efficiently.

Participant assessment submissions are in accordance with a pre-arranged timetable, and their receipt is appropriately monitored. LSBF EE is able to maintain close supervision of participants in delivering their assessments in accordance with the agreed timetable.

Participants have access to high-quality, online learning materials and resources through the Provider's VLE and the online learning environments. This meets the needs of participants and enables them to successfully complete their courses.

Participants confirmed that the use of the online learning system was effective, with staff and tutors trained in helping them to address any technical issues. Inspection findings confirm this view.

4.6 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Strengths

Teaching, learning and assessment are of a high quality overall and the programmes are taught by experienced and skilled industry practitioners so that the participants benefit from the application of knowledge and understanding to practice.

Security arrangements throughout the premises and grounds are excellent, with very good access for those with special needs or disabilities in order to ensure their health and safety.

The active involvement of participants in planning, reviewing and evaluating the provision results in excellent support for participants.

Managers are very effective in self-evaluation, and in setting challenging and realistic targets for improvement, which are monitored regularly.

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:

Margaret Arokiasamy

Lead Inspector