

Student Body Submission Report

Student Submission Focus Group: In attendance

- B. R– Student Lead
- L. S – Student Representative
- N. W – Student Representative
- M. Y – Student Representative

Introduction

- This submission involved consultation with students from each class, 5 were present in compiling this report.
- The process for gathering student's views involved group discussions and one-to-one feedback.
- The lead student representative co-ordinated the student submission in conjunction with the lead class representatives.
- Students views on the academic standards were also captured on end-of-term questionnaires (See Appendix 5)

Section 1: Student representative body

- The relationship forged with the London School of Academics (LSA) college is professional, open, friendly, relaxed and supportive. It is of our opinion that in the experience of the student body, the college is a very unique institution given the 'open-door' policy that it operates, including the ethos of undertaking a holistic approach that supports the student body throughout the journey.
- The student representative body provides an open, accessible and approachable learning environment that enables the students the opportunity to share, discuss and contribute, have their say and express their views.
- Yes, the student submission has been democratically approved by the student body as all the student representatives have gathered the opinions and thoughts of the student body and consolidated them into this report.
- There are no student groups whose voices have not been captured during the research of this document, as the one-to-one's helped to collaborate information in support of this document.

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- As student representatives, we were made aware of the findings of the previous QAA review, which helped assist our understanding of the process.

We have analysed the 2012/13 student submission report and conclude the following:

- 1) The findings of the 2012/13 student submission report outlined one trend which stood out, that students were overwhelmingly happy with the support, teaching, facilities and information they received at the London School of Academics. Students also felt that they had a voice, which was heard by the College. As the student body representatives for 2014/15 we can confirm that in our experience that this trend has continued.
- 2) Another finding of the 2012/13 report outlined that there was evidence that the College can make improvements. Students suggested that one improvement that should be made is the provision of a printer and a library. As the student representatives for 2014/15 we can confirm that the London School of Academics has ensured that this provision has been implemented. We now are fully benefiting from these resources being in place.
- 3) We can also confirm that the college has continued to encourage the student's involvements in sharing their views, thoughts and aspirations. This trend continues as described in the 2012/13 report.
- 4) The college has continued its trend to provide a focus group framework that the student representatives engage with, in order to co-ordinate this report. This involved attending a series of meetings to discuss the student submission report.

Section 2: How effectively the university/college has addressed the recommendations of its last review

- The Principal has personally informed the student body of the recommendations from the previous review outcomes as follows:
 - Need for a resource library;
 - Access to a Printer;

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- Extra-curriculum activities.
- The report of 2012/13 outlined that the findings and recommendations were the sole responsibility of the college, however, the aspect of student engagement in the review process is the only area where students have been involved in implementing changes.
- The college is exceptional and excellent in the range of ways that it shares good practice. This can be seen through our observation and delivery element throughout our course as our lecturers share up-to-date guidance from QAA. We are notified of changes in policies, legislation, regulations and code of conducts that will impact us throughout our journey and profession. The college is exemplary in disseminating information on good practice to ensure we are informed and made aware of issues that will impact us. We are being prepared for the workplace environment within education and training. The college has a strong commitment to ensure that as an institution it adheres to the highest standards of practice. The Principal and lecturer for that particular class will come in and inform the student body and all students of any changes in any policy or government legislation that impacts on teacher training. This is also backed up by emails. The latest government initiative that the Principal informed the students about was the PREVENT programme which will affect all learners as of 18th September 201, as all learners are teaching in their placements.

Section 3: How effectively the university/college sets and maintains the thresholds standards of its academic awards

The college sets the bar from the outset of the rules, expectations and boundaries through the student learning agreement, the handbook and during our induction process we were reminded of the code of conduct, ground rules and organizational operating procedures. We are also informed of the process should any learner have any concerns, or issues that they wish to raise relating to any breach of the code of conduct and expectations.

Academic standards

- In our experience as a student body, we believe that the assessments became more challenging as we progressed through the course.
- We agree that the assessments are appropriate.

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- We agree that the feedback for observations and assignments is timely and helpful.
- Students were made aware of the grading criteria as part of the induction process from the outset and reminded frequently throughout the duration of the course. The marking criteria is also embedded within the student handbook to refer to as and when appropriate. After each observation the lecturer during feedback consultation will refer to the marking criteria and physically highlight the criteria that the student has met as well as areas of development.
- Students were informed about the seriousness of Plagiarism, at the start of the induction process and when each assignment was set. The lecturer reminded all learners of the plagiarism policy located in the student handbook. There was also a dedicated session on plagiarism at the start of the course and has been referred to throughout the journey. The students are made aware of the seriousness of plagiarism and the ramifications.
- As the student body, we are pleased with the stringent enrollment procedures, especially in regards to criminal checks. The college undertakes a rigorous and detailed process of checking student's backgrounds, to ensure that the potential candidates are assessed as to whether they meet the legal requirements of regulatory bodies such as the Data Barring Service (DBS).

Learning Opportunities

- Students acknowledge that staff are fully trained and qualified. The lecturers have excellent subject knowledge and it is evident throughout the journey.
- Students are given feedback forms at the end of each module to express their opinions and highlight any areas of development/improvement that are required. The lecturers are receptive to the feedback and are open-minded, taking on board the suggestions made by the learners.
- Students believe that the learning resources are adequate, literacy, numeracy and ICT are embedded in every delivery. All resources are inclusive to meet all learners' needs and tailored where appropriate.
- Students are involved in quality assurance processes at all levels; for example, being informed about the internal/external verifiers, the role of QAA and how it influences the operation of the college. We were also taught about the importance of quality assurance within a module on the course. (Unit 503, in which we learnt about the role of stakeholders, regulatory bodies and external bodies).

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- Student representation has been effective in enabling students to participate in the recruitment and selection of the student representatives. Induction and training is given on the roles of student representatives and they are supported by the teaching staff who provide regular one-to-one meetings to ascertain the current issues and concerns. The college has an open-door policy, which enables student representatives to be able to meet with the staff outside any meetings to discuss concerns and issues as they arise.
- Students are made aware of the complaints and appeals procedure by referring to the student handbook. Also, the ethos of the college has a supportive approach and the open – door policy enables students to be able to raise issues/concerns in a timely manner with the staff. There have been no complaints to date.
- Students are satisfied with the outcomes and timescales of procedures such as the complaints procedure, where matters can be addressed swiftly and solutions/interventions can be put in place in a timely fashion.
- Students are extremely satisfied with the careers service provided, for example: students are sent regular emails to inform them regarding work, jobs, training, workshops, conferences, and placement opportunities that will assist the learners in their progression. Students are also encouraged to consider establishing their own educational/training institutes or businesses. The college is pro-active in connecting the learners to ‘open-days’ and jobs fairs. This has been very successful as a progression strategy that has resulted in learners getting into work opportunities very quickly. A few of the educational establishments that London School of Academics works with are as follows:
 - Protocol National;
 - Smart Teachers;
 - Empire College;
 - Newham College of Further Education;
 - ICTC Education;
 - Big Creative Education.
 - Personnel Checks-this body carries out the DBS checks.
- Disabled students have reported that they were very pleased to be supported, understood and resources were tailored to meet the learner’s needs. PowerPoint font sizes were modified to cater for learners with visual impairments, including handouts and resources.

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- The college does not have a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in place, however we believe as a student body that it is not relevant as all resources are emailed and shared with all learners. With the college's open-door policy students are able to access and benefit from one-to-one consultation with lecturers, tutors and the Principal.
- The college has the learner agreement within the handbook that sets out mutual expectations and students are made aware of this from the outset. This document has been paramount throughout the whole journey as a reminder of the way in which every student conducts themselves in a professional manner throughout the duration of the course.
- Learning opportunities are given to those candidates who do not have academic qualifications, however, they possess exceptional vocational and life skills experience. Candidates have come from a variety of sectors i.e., the Army [23 Prior Regiment], the beauty industry, hairdressing, construction, health-care professionals [nurses] and candidates who are fluent in speaking a foreign language, i.e., French, Spanish, Italian and German. All learners have an opportunity to learn languages, learn about health issues, attend functional skills workshops (English, Maths, Science and ICT). Learners have an opportunity to model for hairdressing, beauty therapy workshops. Candidates that came with an Army background have taken up employment in colleges teaching Physical Education (P.E.), Citizenship (embedding British Values) and taking young people on outward bound adventure weeks which is primarily a confidence and team-building activity. The main focus 14-18 year olds. Candidates have been successful in embedding focus and discipline strategies in the learning environment and developing good practice skills amongst these young learners. The demographics of the students consists of new arrivals into the borough, students with behavioral support needs and at risk of becoming NEET – Not in Education, Employment and Training.
- Learning support is available to all learners. There is a dedicated dyslexic specialist who is at hand to help and provides students with specialist support and software that assists in breaking down barriers to learning. There is also support staff available to enhance the functional skills of those learners who need additional support, which is mainly Maths.

Enhancement

- The college has a range of methods to enhance the student experience by encouraging the students to have their voice heard through meetings, feedback forms, student representation and

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one-to-one interaction. For example, the college noted that the students requested more social interaction and therefore provided an extensive annual itinerary which consisted of outings, fundraising events for local charities, team-building exercises and social events such as the 'equality and diversity events'. Another example of the college listening and taking on board student voice was incorporated in a democratic vote where our graduation ceremony would be held as opposed to informing us of where it would be held. This approach of consultation was very well received and proved the holistic ethos of the college in the way it operates its' student engagement. Extra-curricular activities which took place during 2014/15 are as follows:

- Seaside Trip to Brighton;
- Paintballing for the younger student cohort;
- Chessington World of Adventures;
- International evening promoting Equality and Diversity which was also a fundraising event;
- Fundraising Quiz;
- End of Term Dinner and Dance;
- Evenings Out which included food and entertained;
- Celebrating Black History Month with the 'Share and Care' event (food exchange event).

Transport (cars and coaches) are provided for all students on these events.

- Equality and Diversity is a valued ethos that the college promotes. It does this by developing culturally appropriate events that celebrate the cultural calendar such as Diwali, Eid, Christmas and Easter. The college also has it's annual Black History Month celebration.
- All evidence of the above are located on the London School of Academics website – <http://www.londonschoolofacademics.com> The student lead rep has suggested that a testimonials page be developed on the website to capture student feedback. This is an action that the Principal will take forward for 2015/16.
- The Principal informs all the student when forthcoming fundraising events are about to take place, giving students the opportunity to nominate their charity of choice, whether it is an individual beneficiary or an organization. During 2014/15, the quiz night fundraiser benefited St Francis Hospice. Another example is the fundraising that took place on the Equality Diversity night, which raised approximately £1200 that will support Kian who is a five year old suffering from Cancer and two young girls who have cerebral palsy who are wheelchair users.

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- Students are made aware of any changes/improvements to the educational experience through verbal communication, emails, student's representatives, handouts and meetings.
- Students are aware of the ethos of continual improvement as can be evidenced from the 2012/13 QAA student report was all recommendations were implemented for the next cohort to benefit from.

Public Information

- The London School of Academics (LSA) website is user-friendly and accurate as the current student body has put forward recommendations for improvements that were received positively and implemented with immediate effect. The Principal's approach is pragmatic, always open to suggestions, ideas and improvements.
- The college theme is of employability which is poignant for all learners as this theme has resulted in learners securing full time placements and work within their chosen professions. This gives all learners an opportunity to develop their professionalism through mentoring and career guidance support.
- Students are engaged with the theme of employability as the student body believe from the feedback they are given from the students, that their ultimate goal is to sustain employment within their current roles and where appropriate find work within the educational and training sector.
- There is also a College Prospectus which is available online at:
<http://www.londonschoolofacademics.com/Lsa-course-guide.pdf>

Conclusions

- **Summary of the key student views**

The key student views are that this unique journey with London School of Academics (LSA) has enriched their career and lives in a positive, supportive way. Students have recommended this course and institution to friends, family and colleagues as their journey has been inspirational, motivational and progressive. There are real outcomes for the learners, who have been successful in moving into employment or on the pathway to further educational, training opportunities. The

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organization is genuinely committed to ensuring that everyone has an equal chance in succeeding in the educational training sector.

- **How has the submission been shared with fellow students?**

- The submission has been shared with student representatives by the Principal and lecturers with the emphasis based upon the importance of growing as an institution, the ability to listen and take on board constructive feedback and the journey forward to implement the changes where possible.

- **Summary of recommendations from 2014/15**

- The student body have felt that the assignments are repetitive and can be consolidated into smaller modules and request that this feedback is given to the City and Guilds awarding body as this is crucial in our findings during this pilot year of the DET programme.
- Development of the testimonials page on the website.
- Signing book for feedback and comments at all future graduation events.

Enclosures

Appendix 5 – Student Questionnaires Data from 2014/15

Which is the same as Term Evaluation Data 2014/15