BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION
(Independent Higher Education)

INSTITUTION: London School Of Business and Finance

ADDRESS: Buchanan House
30 Holborn
London
EC1Y 8HQ

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Karina Kizhner

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 22 November 2024

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 27 February 2025

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1.   Background to the institution

London School of Business and Finance – Business School (LSBF BS/the Institution) is a privately owned educational establishment that was founded in 2003. LSBF BS offers online Bachelor and Master's degrees in Business Administration, Finance, Marketing and Public Health.

The Institution's head office is located in Holborn, central London, United Kingdom (UK). In 2014, LSBF BS became part of Global University Systems (GUS), a network of 20 institutions and academic partners providing education to over 75,000 students worldwide.

Only LSBF BS in the UK is in scope for this inspection and British Accreditation Council (BAC) accreditation.

The Institution's vision is to provide world-class, careers-focused higher education, delivered innovatively and accessibly, to a diverse, global and ambitious student body. It aims to deliver an education that meets the aspirations and needs of its students as well as providing equality of opportunity.

The day-to-day operation of the Institution is the responsibility of the Managing Director (MD) and Vice-Rector (VR), who report to the Academic Board. They are supported on day-to-day matters by the Senior Management Team (SMT), including the Dean. The MD and VR report to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee and the Student Experience Enhancement Group, which in turn both report to the Academic Board on the quality of delivery and the student experience respectively.

GUS provides LSBF BS with various business support services, including Human Resources (HR), premises, marketing, Information Technology (IT), admissions and course design. However, LSBF BS has full independent control of all the educational and quality assurance aspects of its provision.

The degrees offered by the Institution are validated and awarded by partner Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Since 2013, LSBF BS has been in partnership with International Telematic University UniNettuno (ITUU) for the validation of its postgraduate degrees. In 2022, the Institution established a partnership with the University of Law in Guildford, UK for the validation of LSBF BS undergraduate degrees.

LSBF BS is a member of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and of the Business Graduates Association (BGA). Its undergraduate and postgraduate degrees hold dual accreditation from the Chartered Management Institute (CMI).

2.   Brief description of the current provision

LSBF BS has a range of online-only education programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate level. At undergraduate level, a Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Business Administration and a BSc in Financial Management are offered. At postgraduate level, the Institution offers four programmes: Global MBA, Master of Finance and Investments, MSc in Strategic Marketing and Master of Public Health (MPH).

LSBF BS postgraduate programmes include a range of specialist options across a number of business functions, including financial management, investment banking, project management, international business and data analytics. The MPH is available with or without a specialisation in public health management or global public health.

At the time of the inspection, there were 356 part-time students enrolled, all following postgraduate programmes. The majority of students are from African countries, including Botswana, Zambia, Namibia and Guyana. However, a substantial number of students studying at the Institution are based in the UK or countries of the European Union (EU). All students are over 18 years of age. A small majority of the students are male.

Student enrolment for undergraduate programmes takes place annually in January, May and September. Postgraduate programmes are modular, with four intakes a year in January, April, July and October. Clear entry

requirements are set for each programme. As an example, for undergraduate programmes applicants must have a minimum qualification of three A levels at Grades B, B and C, a score of at least 6.0 in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), with at least 5.5 in all components, and mathematics with a minimum level of GCSE Grade 4, or the equivalent of each of these requirements.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was undertaken remotely by one inspector over one day. Meetings were held with the MD, the Dean, administrative staff, teaching staff and students. Examples of online teaching, both live and recorded, were observed. A range of academic and administrative documentation was scrutinised. All information requested was made available and the Institution co-operated fully with the inspection.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	15 & 17–18 August 2023

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

Since October 2024, the MSc in Strategic Marketing and the MBA (Global) have been offered by LSBF (Malta). LSBF (Malta) does not form part of BAC's accreditation. Students enrolled on the MSc in Strategic Marketing and the MBA (Global) offered by LSBF BS prior to October 2024 are now running out, with a final completion date of October 2027.

2.   Response to action points in last report

27.5 LSBF BS must ensure that a regular report is produced that includes a longitudinal performance analysis, with appropriate key performance indicators and action plans.

This action point has been met.

LSBF BS produces a report that summarises the results of all of the Institution's reviews. The report appropriately analyses the data from these reviews against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and includes a comprehensive action plan. As a result, the Institution's leadership receives regular reports that provide a clear overview of LSBF BS's performance across all of its provision over time, and these reports include a clear action plan for the implementation of improvements.

3.   Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Institution should consider developing a document that draws together and details in one place all its administrative policies and supporting procedures.

This recommendation has been appropriately responded to.

A quality assurance framework has been created that contains all policies, procedures, definitions and expectations across all aspects of the Institution's provision. This is suitable for use by all administrative and academic staff and provides a sound basis for the successful operation of the Institution.

LSBF BS should consider developing an administrative staff handbook that provides clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the Institution's administrative staff.

This recommendation has been appropriately responded to.

An administrative staff handbook has been developed that outlines the roles, responsibilities, policies and procedures for the Institution's administrative staff. The handbook is designed to provide staff with the tools and information necessary to fulfil their roles. It is comprehensive and will ensure administrative staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, are aware of the Institution's policies and procedures, and are effective in carrying these out.

4.   Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1   Governance, Strategy and Financial Management (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met
Comments

The Institution has a well-established governance structure, with an Academic Board that is responsible for determining strategy and setting budgets. The structure and role of the Academic Board are clearly defined

in the Institution's quality assurance framework. The Institution is part of the GUS Group, which approves and monitors its budgets. GUS has no day-to-day involvement in the Institution's operations, which are led by the SMT. This is an appropriate structure and ensures the effective management of the Institution.

The Institution has a clear strategy, of which GUS is informed but does not set. The strategy is based on a thorough analysis of the online higher education marketplace, including input from internal and external stakeholders, leading to it being well informed and achievable.

A risk register is used to record identified risks and the associated mitigations that have been implemented. This is a suitable approach and ensures that risks are appropriately managed.

All partnerships have formal agreements. These are appropriate and provide clarity, allowing effective management of the partnership.

LSBF's accounts and finances are subject to regular independent external audit, ensuring financial transparency and compliance with the UK's financial regulations. This is effective and ensures financial openness and viability.

4.2   General and Academic Management and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met
Comments

The Institution has clear structures for management and administration and teaching staff, as detailed in an appropriate organisation chart. All staff understand their responsibilities and relationships within the Institution, ensuring staff are able to be effective in their roles.

Appointment procedures for staff are suitable and based on both qualifications and a demonstration of the skills required by the job description. Qualifications are formally checked and recorded in each staff member's personal file.

HR procedures and processes are provided by GUS and make effective use of the academic and administrative expertise from the Institution. This approach ensures that appropriate academic and support staff appointments are made. All staff have an annual appraisal at which Continuing Professional Development (CPD) needs are identified. These CPD needs are suitably resourced.

Academic management is provided by programme leaders, who report to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee. This is a key academic body that represents both academic and administrative staff. Where necessary, issues are referred to the Academic Board as the ultimate academic decision-making body. This structure is suitable and works well in providing effective academic management.

Student recruitment is dealt with by the recruitment team, which is effective in meeting applicants' needs. Subject-based support and advice are available to applicants as required. This approach works well in giving applicants a responsive service while ensuring applicants have suitable academic qualifications.

Academic research is actively encouraged, with both time and resources being made available to support this. Encouragement and support for research are managed by means of the staff performance appraisal arrangements and CPD identification process. This provides the opportunity to discuss with staff their research activities. A recently introduced LSBF symposium provides an opportunity for all staff to meet, online or in person, to share their research.

All publicity material is initially generated by teachers and signed off by the Dean. This approach is successful in ensuring the accuracy of web pages, course descriptors and other publicity material.

4.3   Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

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

Comments

Teaching is delivered online in live sessions, which students are encouraged to attend. To accommodate students in different time zones, recordings of teaching sessions are made available. Lesson observations show that teaching is well planned and of a good standard and encourages student interaction.

Mandatory offline activities such as discussion questions ensure that all students engage with their learning. Engagement with both synchronous and asynchronous learning allows student involvement to be tracked. Remedial action is taken should a student not be making the expected progress.

The discussion questions, and their subsequent tutor-led review, provide effective formative feedback via a group seminar. Summative assessments are of a good standard and are based on real-world examples. Students confirm that they find the assessments challenging but well judged.

Individual written feedback is provided on final assessments. This approach is suitable for the nature of the online provision and works well.

Teachers develop their own teaching materials, which are prepared for online teaching by the e-learning team. This approach follows good instructional design practice, and consistency of delivery across courses is achieved.

4.4   Student Support, Guidance and Progression (spot check)

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

Comments

Students receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances. There are appropriate staff members responsible for student welfare who are accessible to all students and available to provide advice and guidance.

Students have access to a dedicated student support team. In discussions, students commented that they find the team to be highly effective and supportive, with any issues being dealt with quickly and efficiently. Inspection findings confirm this view.

Effective arrangements are in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. The Institution has a suitable policy that is comprehensive and appropriate and includes policies and procedures to ensure that radicalisation and extremism are appropriately prevented.

Staff have undertaken appropriate radicalisation and extremism awareness training course and there is a suitable risk assessment. As a result, all students are effectively protected from radicalisation.

Students receive appropriate academic support and guidance. They have appropriate access to teaching staff outside teaching and learning sessions. Online academic support is readily available to students. Students are confident that should they need to contact staff, they can do so at any time. Their queries are effectively resolved.

Students' outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of students who are not making satisfactory progress, and prompt intervention is made, where appropriate. There is no requirement for students to attend live teaching sessions. This is appropriate because students are based globally in different time zones. However, all students are required to complete the weekly discussion questions, and this is monitored.

A member of the student support team contacts any student who is failing to engage. The student is then noted as low activity, and the teacher is informed. The teacher then provides support to encourage student

re-engagement. This is an appropriate and effective mechanism for managing student progress and levels of attendance.

4.5   Premises, Facilities and Learning Resources (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met
Comments

Students and academic staff do not use the head office premises since all courses are delivered online.

The e-library provides a fit-for-purpose learning resource for the student body. All students have access to the e-library that includes a wide range of online books, journals and periodicals. Students confirm that they have access to the resources they require to support their studies, including for research and assignment preparation. Inspection findings confirm this to be the case.

The IT resources are well managed, effective and provide a fit-for-purpose learning resource for the students. The resources are well managed and suitable for the online delivery of the Institution's courses. IT support is available to both staff and students, and any issues are resolved rapidly and effectively. Students and staff expressed satisfaction with this provision.

4.6   Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: ☒ Met   ☐ Partially Met   ☐ Not Met
Comments

The Institution regularly obtains and records feedback from students and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary. Feedback is obtained from students through the use of end-of-module surveys and student representatives

Not all students are clear about how the student representative system worked and, as a result, not all students make full use of this facility.

The students are of the view that any issues they raise are appropriately addressed and that they know what action has been taken, as a result. Inspection findings confirm this to be the case.

Stakeholder feedback is also obtained from the Institution's validating HEIs and professional bodies. All feedback is considered by the Student Experience Enhancement Group, and action is taken as necessary. This process is effective in ensuring that appropriate actions are taken in response to stakeholders' views.

Programme leaders produce annual monitoring reviews for consideration by a number of academic boards before being approved for action. These procedures ensure that course monitoring is effective, and the resulting actions are realistic and will enhance the student experience of online learning.

LSBF BS produces an annual report that is drawn from the previous year's institutional reviews. The report analyses the Institution's performance against relevant KPIs and incorporates a comprehensive, whole-institution action plan, which provides a strong basis for the development of LSBF BS and the enhancement of its provision.

The quality management policies and procedures are clearly documented and are brought to the attention of staff. Not all the administrative staff were aware of the details of the overarching quality assurance framework and how this could impact on their roles to ensure they delivered the best quality administrative support.

4.7   Online, Distance and Blended Learning (spot check)

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

Comments

The Institution has suitable staff to ensure the successful delivery of online and distance learning. All teachers have been trained, have a good understanding of online delivery, and are well supported in their work.

The e-learning team provides effective support to teachers by ensuring that teaching materials are of a consistently high standard and offers advice on the techniques of online teaching and learning.

Students comment that lectures are of a good standard and well presented. This was confirmed by the lesson observations carried out during the inspection.

4.8   Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.   ☒ Yes   ☐ No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The Institution has a committed workforce who work together effectively and provide a well-organised and coherent student experience.

There is strong institutional support for staff CPD and staff research, providing effective professional development opportunities.

The student support is highly effective and praised by the students for its responsiveness in resolving issues quickly and effectively.

The e-learning team ensures that online teaching materials are of the highest standard to enhance the student experience.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None	☐ High ☐ Medium ☐ Low

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

It is recommended that the Institution considers how the student representative system can better be explained to the student body.

It is recommended that administrative staff are made aware of the overarching quality assurance framework and how it impacts on their roles.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

BAC OFFICE USE ONLY:	**THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:**	
	Bob Harris	Lead Inspector