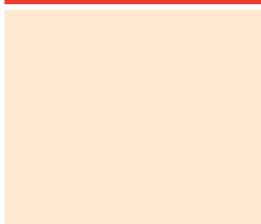
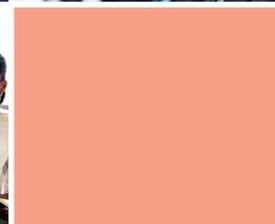


# SHORT COURSE PROVIDER SCHEME DOCUMENT



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR INDEPENDENT FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

**This document must be read in conjunction with the current Accreditation Handbook.**

**BAC accreditation is a voluntary quality assurance scheme for independent providers of further and higher education and vocational training courses.**

The accreditation scheme for short course providers is designed to recognise the particular qualities and distinctive character of providers which offer short, focused training courses to professionals for continuing professional development, to trainees for broadening experience of their chosen profession or to participants for subject reinforcement and revision. On account of the short and often seasonal calendar of courses operated by these providers, they will typically hire a variety of training venues at external premises according to the specific requirements of each course.

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## 2. Eligibility for accreditation

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**Any independent education or training provider in the UK is eligible for accreditation as a short course provider if it meets the following requirements in addition to the general requirements listed in the Accreditation Handbook.**

- The provider does not offer any programmes which extend beyond 26 weeks.
  - The provider uses training venues either within its own premises or in external premises which have been selected specifically for the particular timetable and requirements of individual programmes.
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## 3. Accreditation process

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For comprehensive information on the whole of the accreditation process please see the Accreditation Handbook.

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## 4. Accreditation cycle

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Short Course Provider accreditation is valid for four years. Accredited providers are notified six months before the end of the accreditation period so that a full inspection can be arranged and the institutional report presented to the Accreditation Committee for consideration of re-accreditation before the accreditation period ends.

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## 5. Inspection process

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A full inspection is arranged following successful completion of the first stage of the application process. An inspection team with appropriate experience for the provider being inspected is formed and consists of a lead inspector and usually one specialist inspector for larger providers. It is usual practice for the inspection to take two days but the days allocated will reflect the breadth and size of the provider's services. With newly-accredited providers, an interim inspection is organised in the first year of accreditation. For accredited institutions, an interim inspection is organised in the middle of the four-year accreditation cycle.

Institutions are required to complete and submit a self-evaluation document assessing their quality assurance mechanisms against specific criteria prior to the inspection being conducted.

### 5.1 Inspection areas

**A full inspection covers the following inspection areas:**

- Management, Staffing and Administration
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Participant Welfare
- Premises and Facilities

Management of quality and the provider's quality assurance procedures are assessed throughout each area of inspection.

### 5.2 Minimum standards

The minimum standards for Short Course Provider accreditation are set out in Appendix A. Details are provided of the documents which must be supplied and reviewed and of the staff members who the inspectors will interview during the inspection.

### Legal and regulatory compliance

All new applicants and those applying for reaccreditation are required to sign a declaration stating that the institution complies with all relevant statutory requirements in force in the country of operation, in connection with such matters as health and safety, safeguarding, employment law, copyright, disability provision, equal opportunities, planning consent, data protection and public liability. It is the institution's responsibility and the personal responsibility of the head of the institution to ensure that all requirements are met. BAC inspectors will not inspect the above areas but will note any observed breach of regulations. Although the compliance with statutory requirements is not a BAC minimum standard, evidence of non-compliance will provide the Accreditation Committee with grounds for refusal of accreditation.

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## 6. Approved candidates for accreditation

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The 'approved candidate for accreditation' process is available to any newly-established short course provider operating in the United Kingdom which has not yet recruited participants to its programmes.

- The status of 'approved candidate for BAC accreditation as a short course provider' can be awarded following a successful candidacy inspection.
- The provider will be approved as a 'candidate for BAC accreditation' if the Accreditation Committee is satisfied

that the provider meets or exceeds BAC's minimum standards for premises, management, staffing, administration and documentation relevant to participant welfare. The inspectors also need to be satisfied that robust quality assurance policies and systems are in place.

- 'Approved candidate' status is awarded for a period of six months, during which time the provider must become fully operational.
- If the provider fails to agree a date for the accreditation inspection within this period, its 'approved candidate' status will lapse, unless, exceptionally, the Accreditation Committee agrees to allow an extension.

Approved candidate status is accepted by UKVI as evidence of accreditation which entitles the provider to enrol international participants on UK student visitor visas for courses of up to six months.

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## 7. Programmes and awards

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Due to the nature of short course providers and their focus on the specific training needs of participants BAC accepts that programmes may feature a significant element of bespoke training and may not follow published course descriptions or schemes of work, and that the successful completion of a programme may not lead in itself to any specific qualification or traditional academic award. Under these circumstances, BAC's inspectors will consider the accuracy of any claims made by providers as to the level and status of any internal awards. This will include a requirement for evidence of the extent to which the provider's internal awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study. BAC encourages providers to involve external moderators in their assessment procedures.

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## 8. Top-up inspections

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BAC formally recognises the quality assurance processes of a number of other inspection and review bodies and where appropriate will consider 'top-up' inspections of those providers which have undergone such a process. It is BAC's intention to minimize the burden placed on colleges which hold approved accreditation or Educational Oversight and to tailor inspection requirements to meet individual circumstances.

Further details can be found in the Accreditation Handbook. Applicants who consider that they are eligible for a top-up inspection should contact BAC head office to discuss their situation.

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## 9. Accreditation fees

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All providers awarded accreditation under this scheme will qualify for the Short Course Provider accreditation fee, which is calculated on the number of course days per annum. All other fees (including application and inspection fees) are the same for each type of accreditation. Accurate figures of course days must be supplied to BAC once per year on request. If such figures are not supplied by the deadline given, the full maximum accreditation fees will be charged. Failure to pay the annual accreditation fees by the given deadline on the invoice will result in suspension and the possible withdrawal of accreditation.

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## 10. Accreditation statements and marks

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Providers which have been awarded accreditation may use the statement of accreditation in their promotional materials, subject to certain conditions.

### Acceptable forms of the statement are:

- "accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education as a Short Course Provider"
- "accredited by the British Accreditation Council as a Short Course Provider"
- "accredited by BAC as a Short Course Provider"
- "BAC accredited as a Short Course Provider"

Once accredited, providers may use the BAC accreditation mark of the Short Course Provider accreditation scheme in their promotional materials, subject to certain conditions. The standard accreditation mark features the BAC logo, colour-coded to the specific accreditation scheme, and the word 'accredited'.

Providers awarded 'approved candidate for accreditation' status must use the accreditation mark which incorporates the words 'accredited approved candidate'.

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## 11. Contacting BAC

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Further guidance and details of the generic requirements and responsibilities for BAC-accredited institutions can be found in the Accreditation Handbook. Please contact [info@the-bac.org](mailto:info@the-bac.org) for further information.

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## Inspection area - management, staffing and administration

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### Minimum standards 1-8

#### 1. The provider 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.
- 1.2 The head of the provider and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out.
- 1.3 There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff and those working at the delivery venue/s.

#### 2. The administration of the provider is effective

- 2.1 Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties.
- 2.2 The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the provider.
- 2.3 The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood.
- 2.4 Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the provision.
- 2.5 Data collection and collation systems are effective.

#### 3. The provider 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.
- 3.2 Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment.
- 3.3 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff.

#### 4. Publicity material gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the provider and its curriculum

- 4.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the provider's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered.
- 4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date.

#### 5. The provider takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable participants for its courses

- 5.1 Entry requirements for each course, including those relating to language ability, are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective participants.
- 5.2 A formal application process ensures that participants meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified.
- 5.3 The provider replies to all application enquiries promptly and appropriately and briefs all stakeholders properly on the nature and requirements of its programmes.
- 5.4 Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated.

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

- 6.1 There is a clear and published policy on participant attendance and punctuality.
- 6.2 Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all participants, collated centrally and reviewed.
- 6.3 Participant absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken.

### **7. The provider regularly obtains and records feedback from participants and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary**

- 7.1** The provider has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from participants and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner providers and employers) on all aspects of the provider's provision, including formal participant representation where appropriate.
- 7.2** Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis.
- 7.3** The feedback is reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary.
- 7.4** There is a mechanism for reporting on the provider's response to the feedback to the participant body.

### **8. The provider 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 provider's performance.
- 8.2** Reports are compiled at least annually which present the results of the provider's reviews and incorporate action plans. Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on participant satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates.
- 8.3** Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to the management.

### **Documents required**

- Up-to-date organogram
- Minutes of relevant committee or board meetings
- Minutes of staff meetings
- Detailed CVs for all managerial and administrative staff
- Staff appraisal procedures and completed documentation
- Staff Handbook
- Course descriptions
- Correspondence with participants
- Up-to-date, signed contracts of employment for senior, academic and non-academic staff
- Briefing materials for agents if used
- Up-to-date prospectus and marketing material
- Completed participant application forms and any participant contracts
- Evidence of attendance monitoring, including class registers for each course/programme
- Stakeholder feedback forms
- Completed feedback forms
- Action plans for dealing with stakeholder feedback
- Annual performance reviews at institution and department levels

### **Interviews required**

**As part of their assessment, inspectors will hold interviews with the following:**

- Principal/director
- Senior administrator
- Examinations officer
- Marketing manager

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## Inspection area - teaching, learning and assessment

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### Minimum standards 9-16

#### 9. Programme management is effective

- 9.1 There is a suitably qualified and experienced programme manager or management team with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment and the management of the body of trainers.
- 9.2 Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered.
- 9.3 The allocation of trainers to classes provides for a consistent learning experience and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency.
- 9.4 There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures for the acquisition of teaching and learning resources.

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

- 10.1 Courses are designed and delivered in ways that allow participants to develop the knowledge and skills which will be required for final examinations, assessments or which meet stakeholders' requirements.
- 10.2 Lessons and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body.
- 10.3 Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations.
- 10.4 Participants are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills.
- 10.5 The academic backgrounds and particular needs of participants are taken into account in the delivery of the course.

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

- 11.1 Trainers are appropriately qualified and experienced.
- 11.2 Trainers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skill which allows them to deliver the content of courses effectively.
- 11.3 The appraisal procedures for trainers incorporate regular classroom observation.

- 11.4 Trainers are supported in their continuing professional development and enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the learning of participants.
- 11.5 Trainers respond to different learning needs of participants where appropriate, taking various learning styles into account in their planning and delivery of lessons.
- 11.6 Trainers employ effective strategies to involve all participants in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content.

#### 12. The provider provides participants and trainers with access to appropriate resources and materials for study

#### 13. Participants 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 participants and trainers.
- 13.2 Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of participants who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate.
- 13.3 Participants are made aware of how their progress relates to their targeted level of achievement.
- 13.4 Additional support or advice on alternative courses is provided to participants who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed.
- 13.5 Oral and written feedback is given to individual participants on a regular basis, tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery.
- 13.6 Participants have appropriate access to trainers outside class time.

#### 14. The provider offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies (if applicable)

### 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 participants who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level.
- 15.2 There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study.
- 15.3 External moderators are involved in the assessment process where appropriate.

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

- 16.1 The provider complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration, where appropriate.
- 16.2 For internal awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration, and clear procedures for participants to appeal against their marks.

### Documents required

- Whole course/academic year plans (schemes of work)
- Completed lesson plans
- Timetables for all courses offered by the institution
- Detailed CVs for all academic staff, including evidence of academic qualifications
- Samples of marked work
- Internal quality assurance documentation
- Copies of any policies developed by the institution as a means of quality management
- External quality assurance documentation as required
- Participant files with details of registration, enrolment, attendance and qualifications
- Sample placement tests
- Records of participant progress
- Summaries of results/grades awarded for previous three years for each academic programme (or from start date, if the course has not been available for that time)
- In the case of degree programmes, agreements with degree-awarding bodies
- Documents relating to external moderation
- Copies of external examiners' reports for the previous three years for each academic programme (or from start date, if the course has not been available for that time)
- Copies of annual reports to the awarding bodies for the previous three years
- Copies of any academic reviews carried out by or on behalf of the awarding body
- Completed classroom observation forms
- Staff appraisal procedures and completed documentation

### Interviews required

**As part of their assessment, inspectors will hold interviews with the following:**

- Principal/director
- Programme managers
- Senior administrator
- Examinations officer
- Trainers

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## Inspection area - participant welfare

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### Minimum standards 17-22

#### 17. Participants receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances

- 17.1 There is at least one named staff member responsible for participant welfare who is suitably trained, accessible to all participants and available to provide advice.
- 17.2 Participants receive appropriate information advice before the start of the programme.
- 17.3 Participants receive an appropriate induction and relevant information at the start of the programme.
- 17.4 Participants are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support.
- 17.5 The provider has policies in place to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour.

#### 18. International participants are provided with specific advice and assistance (if applicable)

- 18.1 International participants receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and living in the UK.
- 18.2 International participants receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area.
- 18.3 Information and advice specific to international participants continues to be available throughout the course of study.
- 18.4 Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations. Where possible, participants have access to speakers of their own first language.

#### 19. The fair treatment of participants is ensured

- 19.1 Participants apply for and are enrolled on courses under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions.
- 19.2 Participants have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course.
- 19.3 Participants are advised of BAC's own complaints procedure.

#### 20. Where residential accommodation is offered, it is fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised (if applicable)

- 20.1 Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to the needs of participants.
- 20.2 Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted where participants under 18 are accommodated.
- 20.3 A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of participants.
- 20.4 Separate accommodation blocks are provided for participants under 18.

#### 21. Where home-stay accommodation is organised, the welfare of participants is ensured and the provider's relationship with hosts is properly managed (if applicable)

- 21.1 Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation which both provides a safe and comfortable living environment for participants and is appropriately located for travel to the provider and back.
- 21.2 Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before participants are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the provider.
- 21.3 The provider has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision.
- 21.4 Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and participants before and during the placement.
- 21.5 Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for participant feedback and prompt action taken in the event of problems.

## 22. The provider provides an appropriate social programme for participants and information on leisure activities in the area (if applicable)

- 22.1 Participants are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation at events and other leisure activities which may be of interest.
- 22.2 The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of participants.
- 22.3 Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability by the majority of participants.
- 22.4 Any activities organised by the provider are supervised by a responsible representative with suitable qualifications and experience.

### Documents required (where appropriate)

- Participant induction packs
- Social programmes
- Participant handbook or guidance documents
- Home stay documentation

### Interviews required (where appropriate)

As part of their assessment, inspectors will hold interviews with the following:

- Principal/director
- Senior administrator
- Welfare officer
- Participants

## Inspection area - premises and facilities

### Minimum standards 23-26

#### 23. The provider has secure possession of and access to its premises

- 23.1 The provider has secure tenure on its premises.
- 23.2 Where required, the provider has access to suitable external premises for training purposes of a temporary or occasional nature.

#### 24. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for participants and staff

- 24.1 Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured.
- 24.2 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness.
- 24.3 There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories), made readily available to participants, staff and visitors.
- 24.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to participants, staff and visitors.
- 24.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information.
- 24.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of participants and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors.
- 24.7 There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness.
- 24.8 There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms.

#### 25. Training rooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered

- 25.1 Training rooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them.
- 25.2 Training rooms and any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each course.
- 25.3 There are facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required on each course.

## 26. There are appropriate additional facilities for participants and staff

- 26.1 Participants have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private study, including library and IT resources.
- 26.2 Trainers have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation.
- 26.3 Participants and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate.
- 26.4 Participants and staff have access to storage for personal possessions where appropriate.
- 26.5 There are individual offices or rooms in which trainers and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings.
- 26.6 Administrative offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the provider.

### Documents required (where appropriate)

- Current lease agreement(s)
- Floor plan of each site being inspected
- Booking documentation for delivery venues or training rooms

### Interviews required (where appropriate)

**As part of their assessment, inspectors will hold interviews with the following:**

- Principal/director
- Maintenance/facilities manager



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