



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (College)

INSTITUTION: Aberdeen Drilling School

ADDRESS: 50 Union Glen
Aberdeen
AB11 6ER

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr J. Sutherland

Accreditation status: Accredited

Date of inspection: 10 December 2015

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: 28 January 2016

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

Aberdeen Drilling School Limited is a private training company operating principally out of Aberdeen but also with training centres in Malaysia, Oman and Saudi Arabia. The School specialises in the design and delivery of short courses in rotary well drilling, well intervention pressure control, awareness for non-technical personnel, drilling performance improvement, rig site services and drilling engineer development.

Currently the School trains around 2000 personnel each year in the theoretical and practical aspects of pressure control for drilling and well servicing operations on land and sea based installations, ensuring (through in-house and externally validated assessment processes) that they have the right level of competence to undertake field operations using specific equipment and enabling systems.

While the requirement for regular reassessment and certification of skills and knowledge in order to maintain a ticket to operate gives a regular through-put of business for the School, this does not apply, for example, to awareness courses, which are discretionary from a customer point of view. The fall in the oil price has brought about a retrenchment in non-mandatory training and this has led to a fall in student numbers in Aberdeen. However, this has been compensated by a corresponding increase in business in Kuala Lumpur.

The Macondo oil rig explosion in 2010 and the subsequent International Association of Oil and Gas Producers report have had a profound impact on the industry and prompted re-examination of oil and gas operators' ability to respond to a well control incident. As a consequence, the awarding bodies have set new more rigorous standards and this has involved the School in a process of reaccreditation (obtained in March 2015) and preparations for the offering of WellSharp Training.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The School currently offers courses accredited by the International Well Control Forum (IWCF) and the International Association of Drilling Contractors (IADC) as well as its own courses. The IWCF courses comprise: Well Control Level 2, 3 and 4 and Well Intervention Pressure Control Level 2, 3 and 4. The main IADC offering is WellSharp at Introductory, Fundamental and Supervisory Level. Aberdeen Drilling School's own courses are: 2-day Introduction to Well Services; 4-day Basic Drilling, Technology and Equipment; 1-day Basic Drilling Awareness; 2-day Introduction to the Oil Industry; 2-day Stuck Pipe Prevention; and 3-day HPHT Training for Offshore Operations.

All students are part time, over 18 and the great majority are male.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted over half a day by one inspector. A meeting was held with the Operations Manager and the Administrative Supervisor. A tour of the premises was made, new equipment viewed and informal discussions held with a number of staff.

The School provided comprehensive documentation as evidence in relation to each recommendation and discussions were very open and constructive.

4. Inspection history

Full inspection: 13 and 14 July 2010

Interim inspection: 19 October 2011

Full inspection: 23 and 25 September 2014

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

The School has been accredited by IADC to offer WellSharp. This course replaced one in which assessment was administered by the centre to a computer-based examination system and third party invigilation by Lloyds. There have also been significant changes to the IWCF syllabuses.

The School has made a £1m investment in a new simulator, with a much wider application, including team-based training, than the small simulator used previously.

The School has also created a Marketing and Customer Services post to ensure a greater focus on the 'whole customer experience'.

Finally, as noted above, the School has had to adapt to the market changes brought about by the fall in the price of oil.

2. Response to actions points in last report

2.1 All roles across the School must be specified and written up – (standard 1.0).

There are now job descriptions for all roles. A file was provided for the inspector to review. It is planned that the appraisal system will be linked to these job descriptions.

2.2 Policies and procedures across the School must be formalised and written up and communicated to all staff: a comprehensive staff handbook would be a useful addition – (standard 2.4).

The School now has a staff handbook and a comprehensive range of succinct and well written policies, including: Anti-Corruption and Anti-Bribery Policy, Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy, Disciplinary Procedure, Fire Safety Procedure, Grievance Procedure, Health and Safety Policy, Internal Email and Telephone Usage Policy, Performance Appraisal Guide, Probation Policy and Recruitment Policy.

2.3 There needs to be a formal policy adopted for the recruitment of qualified staff – (standard 3.1).

A very clear Recruitment Policy and Procedure has been developed.

2.4 Qualifications must be verified before employment of staff – (standard 3.2).

Qualifications are now verified before employment is confirmed.

2.5 The School must introduce an appraisal system at the earliest opportunity – (standard 3.3).

The School has developed a guidance document and template for staff performance appraisal. The appraisal system has so far been applied only with three new starts at the end of their probation period. There is some concern that a formal appraisal system might detract from ongoing informal feedback and interaction but the School agreed that this was a risk that should be managed.

2.6 *All feedback should be carefully analysed and, where appropriate, action taken – (standard 7.2 & 7.3).*
The School collates all feedback and produces a summary report, two examples of which were shared with the inspector. While indicating a very high overall level of customer satisfaction, the report also carefully analysed the small proportion of critical comments. For example, out of 437 delegates attending WC L3 & L4 courses, 5 delegates stated that they would not recommend the course to a colleague. Each case was reviewed separately and each delegate was informed of planned corrective actions or solutions where applicable. It transpired that the School may have been processing some booking requests without adequate consideration of whether the course was appropriate for the applicant. The Customer Service Team now aims to provide screening and guidance on course suitability prior to confirming a booking. This process is supported by ongoing cross-training where each team member will become more familiar with each course offered, who it is designed for, and what the learning outcomes are. The implementation of such procedures aims to discourage delegates from registering on a course which is not relevant or not useful to their current job role and should minimise the likelihood of similar feedback in the future.

2.7 *The systems to review standards and assess performance must be thoroughly reviewed, especially in the light of the changes in the industry and revised syllabi - (standard 8.1, 8.2 & 8.3).*

Examination statistics for all accredited courses are now collated and analysed on a monthly basis. The statistics for 2015 showed a consistently high standard of achievement.

2.8 *All the lesson observation material is in place, but now needs to be implemented at the earliest opportunity – (standard 11.3).*

The School has a Technical Audit Scheme, which is now being implemented. A suitable session is mutually agreed by instructor and the observer to ensure maximum benefit is gained from the audit (e.g. new material or new syllabus content). The observation lasts about an hour and discussion takes place as soon as possible afterwards. The three stage process comprises: initial briefing (to agree audit topics, methodology and ground rules); the observation itself (based on agreed criteria, minimally disruptive and with factual note taking); and debriefing (comment from instructor, discussion based on observer's notes, signed off feedback and agreed action plan).

2.9 *The introduction of external moderators for ADS examinations should be considered – (standard 15.3).*

This recommendation was overtaken by changes in the IADC assessment system. All examinations are now externally invigilated or proctored.

2.10 *Attention must be given to ensuring that important information is conveyed to delegates in written format: a simple student handbook would seem the most appropriate vehicle – (standard 18.3).*

A Classroom Information Folder and Student Welcome Pack are now available to all students.

2.11 *The complaints procedure must be in writing and attention drawn to the BAC procedures – (standard 20.2 & 20.3).*

This recommendation has been implemented.

3. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements – spot check

3.1 Management, Staffing and Administration

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments All aspects of management and administration are effective and very well documented.				

3.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments The systems for reviewing teaching, learning and assessment (student feedback, technical audit and exam stats analysis) are thorough and effective.				

3.3 Student Welfare

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				

3.4 Premises and Facilities

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Institution's strengths

The School has a strong focus on technical excellence and a cohesive and effective management team. They have responded very well to all recommendations in the previous report.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable	