



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

ORGANISATION:	The Oxford Institute
ADDRESS:	Office/administration: 2 Burlington Crescent, Headington, Oxford, OX3 8DY Residential course venue: Somerville College, Woodstock Road, Oxford, OX2 6HD
HEAD OF ORGANISATION:	Ms Nazish Gulzar - Principal
Accreditation status:	Accredited
Date of inspection:	20 August 2014

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 21 October 2014

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the organisation

Four co-founders formed Oxbridge Education Network, which was incorporated as a limited company at Companies House in February 2013. The four co-founders are registered as members and directors, and the registered address, and the office, is at the home address of one of the co-founders in Headington, Oxford. These four undertake all the senior roles of strategy, planning, administration and academic management of the company, as well as important responsibilities in the day-to-day operation. This company is currently trading under the name of The Oxford Institute (TOI). The four met as fellow tutors and mature students at Oxford University about three years ago. They developed their ideas and identified the need for the provision of opportunities that might be facilitated by a summer school for able and enthusiastic young students. Their aim is for students to experience and learn about the potential educational advantages of making an application to one of the two universities: Oxford or Cambridge. In particular it is intended to expose students, with no previous opportunity or knowledge of these universities, to the rich environment and the variety of learning that could reasonably be available to them, and especially to the collegiate tutorial system of learning. The co-founders are supported in their development and provision by their broad network of Oxford tutors and mature graduates and, in particular, a previous President of the Oxford Union who is currently a mature student at Christ Church, Oxford.

The co-founders appreciate that they already have significant experience in a variety of the necessary skills and experience. For example: a wide range of academic subjects; tuition and assessment; employment; business projects; and management. As a consequence, they realised that, initially, they could develop and manage the necessary administration, and a part of the academic provision, themselves. Their personal networking allowed them ready access to appropriate Oxford University tutors for the additionally required subject areas, and to mature students for administrative support for the duration of the summer schools.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The co-founders developed a structured summer school programme entitled The Oxford Experience. This second year's provision comprises a two week Standard course which is extendable for a further two weeks to comprise an Advanced course. Both courses are full-time, and residential in the usual Oxford University student accommodation, in the main building of an Oxford College, in the centre of the city. For 2014, both courses were again provided during July and August.

The programme comprises two two-week courses, so that students from outside the EU require student or child visitor visas. The courses have been designed to allow the students to gain a comprehensive experience of a typical student's life at a collegiate university: in this case, Oxford University. They include opportunities to: live, sleep and eat in a typical student's environment; take part in small group tuition with an Oxford University tutor; learn about some specialist subject curricula; debate; research; engage in project work and presentations; develop the skills for Oxford University application and interview; recreational activities; visit some historic London venues, and dine in several local restaurants. The students were able to opt for diverse specialist subject areas for tuition ranging from English to Medicine to Engineering. In general the aims are to raise students' confidence, skills, experience, curiosity, and their expectations of a collegiate university.

The first (Standard) two-week course had 35 students, and the second (Advanced) two-week course had 25. The majority of the students were under the age of 18, although none was under 16. Overall, there were about equal numbers of male and female students, although this was not the case for each of the individual two-week courses. The students were recruited worldwide and represent at least ten different nationalities, with only two from within the EU, one of whom was from the UK.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out over one half-day by one inspector at Somerville College, the venue for the 2014 Summer School currently in progress with the Advanced two-week course. The inspector met three of the director/co-founders (Dean and Logistics Director, Registrar and Marketing Director, Academic Coordinator Director), and the Administration and Welfare Officer. The fourth co-founder was overseas. All three co-founders and the Administration and Welfare Officer were freely available, helpful and hospitable throughout. The inspection, in the main, comprised meetings in a private room set aside for this purpose. In addition, the inspector toured Somerville College to view the premises in use for 2014: in particular, the student study-bed rooms, the tutorial and group meeting rooms and the student common rooms. Following feedback from 2013, Somerville College has made available some alternative and more suitable accommodation for 2014, and the inspector viewed all these improved facilities, which included enhanced WiFi access and a significant student common-room facility. All documents requested were immediately available. It is TOI's intention only to provide short courses. It has no teaching premises of its own, but does own its office in Headington, which was visited and inspected in 2013.

4. Inspection history

Stage 2 inspection: 29 April 2013

Stage 3 inspection: 7 August 2013

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

(If there has been a change of premises which has not been reported on previously, please include a full report on the new premises)

There has been no change of premises. However, Somerville College has made more suitable and enhanced accommodation available for 2014 within the same premises.

2. Response to action points in last report

There were no action points in the last report but, in order to review the 2013 courses, and to prepare for the 2014 summer school, The Oxford Institute was recommended to:

- set up a formal, comprehensive system of human resource, assessment, and review records for co-founders, tutors, and participants.
This has now been done, and has been implemented for 2014 with a Google business account that provides an appropriate administrative package and archive facility.
- develop routine systems for the more full recording of meetings, reviews, and strategic planning.
Criteria have been developed both for tutor and for student selection, and these are in the public domain.
- develop internal quality assurance policies and documentation as appropriate to future needs and strategy.
The current programme now focuses on student needs and their individual experience.
- update their website with images, material, and experience gleaned from the 2013 programme.
The social medium Facebook has been used to show images from the 2013 programme and is updated frequently with both images and videos from the current 2014 programme. Facebook access will be linked to the website shortly. The website pages also now monitor their number individual hits.
- encourage Somerville College to upgrade their WiFi system.
Somerville College has made more suitable accommodation available for 2014 with improved WiFi within the same premises.
- consider the provision of a common room for participants' use in the evenings.
Somerville College has made appropriate and well equipped rooms available for 2014 within the same premises. These include a student bar and games.
- consider accessing a consultant, possibly from within the University of Oxford, to give mature advice, and to provide some long-term planning criteria based on University policy.
This has now been done by consulting with two Oxford academics, and found to be supportive for long-term planning.

The Oxford Institute should develop criteria for selection, and contracts for use with, overseas agents if these are to be employed for future recruitment of participants.

This is now in progress. In addition, two overseas agents have been appointed to introduce students from India and from China. However, TOI retains the final student selection procedures, and students pay their fees direct to TOI.

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 Students attending in 2014 have come from worldwide, including from Dubai, China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South America, Brazil, Germany and Romania. Overall for 2014, there are approximately equal numbers of male and female students. TOI now use a detailed tutor-observation assessment form. Improvements have been made to the administration and feedback systems. Increased administrative proficiency will result in the possibility of about a 20% increase in student numbers for 2015, together with an appropriate increase in the tutor numbers.				

3.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Tutor groups comprise two or three students and so reflect the Oxford tutorial tradition. A wide range of subject options for tuition is available. Typically, each student sees two subject-specific tutors and three or four general-subject tutors.				

3.3 Participant Welfare

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Extensive data is collected from each student at induction. Students provide anonymous written feedback every two weeks, one-to-one feedback to their tutor and informal, oral feedback, at any time. Some feedback ideas have been implemented immediately. An improved variety of choice for lunch has been made available. A new events office, with a notice board, provides a good information source for students. Three of the senior staff are now first-aid trained and a first aid kit is taken on all trips outside Oxford.				

3.4 Premises and Facilities

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Improved space and facilities have been made available, by Somerville, within their same premises, for TOI's 2014 Summer School.				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Institution’s strengths

Enthusiastic, well qualified and experienced team of co-founders in management and administration. The longer term business plan has been developed. The co-founders approach their future challenges with flexibility, rigour, and with their minds open to new ideas.

The co-founders have developed a considerable network of proven and supportive tutors and mature graduates known personally to them for many years within Oxford University.

Co-founders are already familiar, and have previously worked, with young people similar to the participants.

Oxford tutors and mature graduates are well experienced and best placed to pass on their support, knowledge and advice to participants.

Somerville College is an ideal, central Oxford venue to accommodate participants' welfare, tuition, learning, and familiarity with the university.

Tuition and learning is within very small tutorial groups consistent with the Oxford collegiate tradition.

Feedback documentation and a method for its analysis have been implemented for the 2014 summer school.

Course fees are fully inclusive.

Arrangements to transfer participants between London airport and Oxford work well.

Access to the wide ranging facilities and environment of the City of Oxford, its University and the many local facilities.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
Telephone number provided on TOI’s website should either be deleted, or the telephone fully manned, especially for the duration of the Summer School.	M

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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