



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Online, Distance & Blended Learning)

ORGANISATION: Real Training

ADDRESS: Canterbury Innovation Centre
University Road
Canterbury
CT2 7FG

HEAD OF ORGANISATION: A G McGregor, M J Turner, and Mrs S M Mellor

Accreditation status: Accredited

Date of inspection: 28 April 2015

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 9 July 2015

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Real Training was set up in 2004 with two partners who are experienced educational psychologists. It became part of a newly-established limited (holding) company, the Real Group (UK) Ltd, in 2008, a company limited by shares with three Directors, all educational psychologists. The company's name was changed to Real Group Ltd in 2015. The holding company incorporates Real Psychology (psychological services to schools and colleges and other educational establishments), Real e-learning (consultancy for applied online learning for other partners) and Real Training (courses delivered on-line, face-to-face and in a blended way). Real Training, the accredited organisation, focuses on the delivery of specialist training courses for teachers, teaching assistants and other educational professionals who work in mainstream and special schools with children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). Most of these courses are delivered using on-line, distance and blended learning, and typically there are up to fourteen face-to-face courses of one to three days in duration a year. These include the recently-introduced one-day RETA (Refresher in Educational Testing & Assessment) course and the three-day CCET (Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing) course. There are three or four bespoke courses held in client schools a year.

The Real Group also writes course materials and provides consultancy services to external clients, such as the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), the London Borough of Camden LEA, charities, and commercial companies. Real Training has had a successful partnership with Middlesex University since 2009. This stemmed from a Department for Education (DfES) ruling that every new Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in a mainstream school must obtain a Masters-level National Award for Special Educational Needs Coordination (NASCO) within three years of taking up their post. Real Training has an ongoing partnership with Middlesex University to deliver the National Award for SEN Coordination as part of a fully validated Masters-level programme, which is proving very popular with SENCOs in schools and colleges. Recently, Real Training has been asked to co-develop an updated MA course in Inclusive Education, to be delivered on-line in association with the University.

Real Training is administered in two locations: in attractive and well-appointed serviced offices (the Innovation Centre) on the University of Kent campus at Canterbury, and in Greenwich, where staff are mainly engaged in marketing and course development.

2. Brief description of the current provision

As outlined above, Real Training delivers the Masters-level SEND programme in Special Educational Needs in partnership with Middlesex University, through e-learning. The key module of the programme leads to the level 7 National Award for SEN Coordination. A number of elective modules are available, including a Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing (CCET) award, validated by the British Psychological Society, which is also offered as a free-standing qualification. In addition to the SEND programme, Real Training is currently running a Professional Assessment Programme, which covers the suite courses other than the Master's SEND programme. The CCET award, the company's main course, is held within both the SEND programme and the Professional Assessment Programme; it can either be studied on-line, or via an intensive three-day residential workshop, which is followed up by applied tasks submitted on-line post-course.

At the time of the current interim inspection, 1523 part-time students were registered on Real Training courses, compared to 810 at the last inspection in 2014. This breaks down to 292 students on the National Award for SEN Coordination (247 in 2014), 193 on the CCET online course (257), and 196 on the CCET intensive workshop course (212). There are 360 remaining students enrolled on one or more of the extensive list of optional courses within the SEND programme and the Professional Assessment Programme.

Since the last inspection a newly-established one-year Certificate of Competence in Psychological Practice (16-25) course for educational psychologists has been developed in partnership with an experienced educational psychologist; the course has been approved by the BPS (British Psychological Society) and 482 part-time students are enrolled on this year-long course.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was undertaken by one inspector in half a day at the office in Canterbury. An extended meeting was held with the company director with overall responsibility for on-line programmes, and there were short discussions with other senior administrators. The inspector reviewed documentation provided during the inspection, including a CCET course manual for delegates, SEND programme handbook (showing an outline of courses, scheme of work and assessment criteria), minutes of a recent directors' meeting (20 March), and a small sample of recently-submitted students' work. An updated organisational chart was provided.

4. Inspection history

Full inspection: 23 and 30 January, 5 February 2014

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 have been no significant changes since the last inspection.

2. Response to action points in last report

There were no action points. The following recommendations were offered:

Real Training may wish to consider the introduction of a more formal process for monitoring and reviewing tutor support, and to consider ways of updating tutors on policies and procedures, teaching materials, and online developments.

Real Training should consider how to obtain more regular and formal feedback from learners' own employers, for example on the impact of their training on professional practice within their schools.

Response:

More formal process for reviewing tutor support: All delegate feedback is now collated by the tutor and circulated regularly to tutors, who can comment. A recent tutor feedback (April 2015) was seen and 97% of delegates rated tutor support and feedback as excellent. Tutors also get copies of all delegate comments to help them improve their practice. The process for moderating the grades of submitted assignments has been strengthened and all tutors are invited to be part of the moderating process.

Updating tutors: As well as the above, one director visits face-to-face e-courses to update tutors and evaluate delivery. Real Training briefs tutors regularly by e-mail, a recent briefing seen indicating high-quality practice. The newsletter-style briefing included details of a new Dyslexia Module.

More regular feedback on the impact on school practice: Real has introduced a regular stakeholders' report, three times a year. 141 heads of centres (schools etc) were asked to comment on the impact of the course on their school and the learners. 87% considered that the impact of the course on the SENCO had been highly positive. The impact on school pupils was high (70%), as it was on school strategic practice (75%).

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 A high level of planning was observed in the administrative office for the Refresher course in Manchester. Excellent evidence of on-line discussions and bookings.				

3.2 Teaching, Learning and Achievement

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Samples of on-line assessed work from teachers on the part-time Master's course were viewed and found to be of high quality, suitably checked for plagiarism. Part of the assessment includes on-line videos sent by teachers to confirm their tasks. This is exceptionally good practice.				

3.3 Learner Support

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Examples of recent delegate feedback to Real Training showed high quality qualitative and quantitative feedback including an evaluation sheet for face-to-face courses held recently. Evidence of recent learner feedback shows high level of satisfaction in all aspects.				

3.4 Management of Quality

	Met	Partially met	Not met	NA
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Minutes of a recent board of study meeting held as a conference telephone call shows an excellent ongoing process. Mid-early and end of course evaluations help to maintain quality. An external examiner from the University of Exeter reviews a sample of work twice a year; this is excellent practice.				

3.5 Premises and Facilities – face-to-face component

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

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Provider's strengths

Very strong leadership, management and administration of courses for teachers which have an excellent reputation and are both popular and of high quality.

The provider has excellent ongoing links with Middlesex University to help it moderate its Master's degree programme and maintain high quality.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None.	

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

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