



## **BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT**

### **INTERIM VISIT (Short Course Provider)**

**PROVIDER:** Reach Cambridge

**ADDRESS:** 23 King Street  
Cambridge  
CB1 1AH

**HEAD OF PROVIDER:** Ms J Evans

**DATE OF VISIT:** 13 June 2018

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** Continued accreditation 19 July 2018

## **PART A - INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Background to the provider**

Reach Cambridge (RC/the Provider) was established, as a limited company, in 2004. It has provided short non-accredited programmes in Cambridge since June 2005. The scheduled provision comprises pre-university programmes in academic subjects as well as wider learning opportunities in areas such as young leadership or creative writing. The programmes are designed for United Kingdom (UK) and international high school students who aim to progress to university. The programmes are offered during the spring and, more extensively, in the summer. In addition, tailor-made programmes are offered to visiting groups in a variety of subjects and at agreed times throughout the year.

RC was significantly affected by the decision, in 2016, of the Singaporean government to change its policy on studying overseas and this resulted in a sudden loss of around 150 participants from Singapore. RC has subsequently increased its recruitment efforts in other geographical areas and has managed to make up the losses occasioned by the Singaporean policy change.

The Provider's aims are to prepare students for university, widening their horizons with unforgettable experiences, world-class teaching and the chance to grow in confidence. Reach Cambridge do this through its programme of challenging courses, varied group activities, lectures and excursions.

The head of the institution is the Managing Director, whose work is overseen by the Company Director. Daily operations are led by the Managing Director supported by a leadership team including an Assistant Director, a Director of Curriculum, and Operations Coordinator and a Marketing and Sales Manager. There is also a permanent support team, whose work includes finance, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), sales and admissions. Supervisors and teaching staff are employed on a seasonal self-employed basis. The administrative staff work from home. Therefore, there is no central year-round administrative office. The address in King Street is the registered office and mailing address for the company.

During the spring and summer, RC hires premises from Cambridge University colleges for on-site administration, teaching and residential accommodation. It also hires other teaching premises as necessary. The current permanent premises used for teaching and accommodation, called Reach Hall, were acquired on a part-own part-lease basis in 2014 and came into operation in November 2015. Reach Hall is located a ten-minute walk from Cambridge city centre and comprises two buildings linked by a small garden. These are The Coach House, which provides a large teaching room with adjoining rooms, and residential accommodation in an adjacent property. Reach Hall is also used to provide conference facilities and residential accommodation for general visitors to Cambridge.

### **2. Brief description of the current provision**

The current provision includes academic study of a range of subjects in humanities, sciences, engineering, law and other career and business-related areas. Programmes in English as a Second Language, introduction to architecture and preparation for Standard Assessment Tests are also offered. In addition to the core academic component, courses include evening lectures, workshops on university life, excursions and sporting and other recreational activities.

The popularity of the different types of programmes changes according to universities' priorities, since the provision is designed to prepare the participants for university. The current trend is towards engineering and psychology, with a slight decrease in the numbers of participants taking up programmes in the humanities.

At the time of inspection there were no participants attending programmes. The programmes were due to start some weeks after the inspection with 309 participants enrolled.

The typical participant cohort comprises slightly more female than male learners, with Indonesian participants comprising the largest number. Other participants come from over 50 other countries. Significant numbers of students come from India, Malaysia and China and increasing numbers of students come from Australia, South America, Japan and Saudi Arabia. There are a few UK-based participants. Although aimed primarily at participants aged between 15 and 17 years old, both younger and older participants are also accepted on spring and summer courses. About half of all participants have been aged 14 to 16 years with the remainder aged 16 to 18.

RC can cater for up to 450 participants but generally delivers programmes to around 150 to 200 participants at any one time. Further expansion is envisaged by increasing tailor-made courses at other times in the year apart from Spring and Summer.

Approximately equal numbers of students come through three distinct recruitment routes. These are individuals, who enrol mainly because of personal recommendations, individuals and school groups who hear about the Provider from marketing visits and schools, which have used the Provider for some time.

### **3. Inspection visit process**

The inspection was undertaken by one inspector over half a day. The inspector reviewed the Reach Hall premises, scrutinised documents, met with the Company Director, the Managing Director and other year-round management and administrative staff.

### **4. Inspection history**

Full accreditation inspection:	7-8 August 2008
Interim inspection:	11 August 2009
Supplementary inspection:	29 June 2011
Re-accreditation inspection:	5 & 20 June 2012
Interim inspection:	1 August 2014
Re-accreditation inspection	10-11 March 2016

## **PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

*The following judgments 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**

Since the last inspection, the Provider has undergone substantial change. As the result of a programme review and the opinions and preferences of participants, the provision model was changed from five and a half hours of academic study per day, supplemented by wider learning in such areas as community outreach and the Young Leaders programme, to a fairly even allocation of hours between academic study and wider, personal development. RC continually reviews its provision to ensure it responds to national drivers, its competitors and, most crucially, the needs and interest of its participants.

Spring programmes were introduced for the first time in 2017 and these have been expanded in 2018. This initiative provides progression opportunities for spring participants to further extend their learning by also attending summer programmes. There are instances of this starting to take place. The number of summer programmes has also increased with the addition of a third programme.

Staffing changes include the restructuring of the organisation to include the appointment of an Assistant Director, who holds designated responsibility for Safeguarding, a Director of Curriculum who takes the lead on quality assurance and quality improvement, and an expanded supervisory team who look after the day-to-day needs of the participants.

### **2. Response to action points in last report**

*3.2 Qualifications of administrative and managerial staff must be verified before employment on year-round appointments.*

RC has updated its recruitment processes and qualification evidence, such as certificates, is verified, scanned and uploaded to a secure repository.

### **3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report**

*Develop fuller documentation of certain procedures (for instance on aspects of admissions).*

Where necessary, various procedures, including for admissions, have been subject to extended documentation. As a result, arrangements in those area are clearer.

*Create a clearer assignment of responsibilities in writing in certain areas to provide more robust arrangements in the event of staff changes etc.*

Allocations of responsibility are now represented on a summary responsibility matrix, which clearly indicates which staff have responsibility for each aspect of the Provider's business.

*Review the advertised age range for summer courses or review the statement on age range of students on summer courses to make clearer that they are university-preparatory.*

The website now states the age range for summer students explicitly so that there is no doubt about the focus for the courses.

*Express the level of English required for summer courses is in relation to well-known levels such as IELTS or IGCSE.*

Although not referring to a qualification level, the website clearly articulates the level of English required to provide access and optimise learning on its programmes.

*Give a clearer statement that students whose level of English is found on arrival to be insufficient for academic courses will be transferred to a full-time ESOL course.*

The website now states explicitly that students whose level of English is found to be insufficient for academic courses will be transferred to a full-time ESOL course.

*Make clear the physical access situation at course venue.*

Whilst appropriate information about physical access is clearly expressed in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section of the website, it is not sufficiently explicit unless visitors to the website navigate to this section.

*Consider appropriate and practicable variations in the detailed rules to reflect differences in age of participants and its responsibilities towards participants of different ages.*

The Provider has considered this recommendation and judges that the age differences of participants, apart from in regard to general safeguarding matters, is not a factor of its provision that requires different rules. Therefore, this recommendation no longer applies. Inspection findings confirm this view.

*Give greater prominence to road safety issues in its student induction.*

The revised induction arrangements and supporting slideshow presentation fully cover the necessary aspects of road safety.

*Clarify informal processes in making a complaint.*

The terms and conditions section of the enrolment documentation now includes additional information on how to make a complaint and these instructions are very clear.

*Consider additional provision of hooks and hangers in Reach Hall. Consider cleaning brickwork and improving signage of Reach Hall.*

This recommendation has been considered and action is not thought to be necessary at this stage.

#### **4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements**

##### **4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)**

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<b>Comments</b>				
Management arrangements are coherent, responsive and robust. Leaders and managers have a clear focus on the continuous improvement of the quality of RC's operations and make appropriate changes to the management structure in order to facilitate further improvements.				
Managers appropriately analyse the provision using a good range of evidence and data. They produce a summary report for their own use. This document does not take account of the full range of evidence, such				

as conversion rates, internal progression and comparisons between participants' feedback in key areas of provision over time. The summary report is not currently shared beyond the permanent leadership team.

Managers have a successful focus on the provision of a good quality teaching and learning experience for their participants. Observations of teaching and learning and surveys of participants' experiences take place systematically and regularly and feedback to teachers often results in improvements to programmes. For example, during one of the networking lunches and dinners attended by the teachers and leadership team, adaptations to a programme were discussed and subsequently implemented so that the current participant cohort received timely benefit.

Managers successfully evaluate the impact of RC's provision, by gathering extensive participant survey material, which evaluates participants' satisfaction levels well. However, managers do not currently know if their provision improves participants' chances of studying the course of their choice at the university of their choice.

Although managers compile a good range of evidence, through observations of lessons and gathering survey data, to support their judgment that teaching and learning are effective, there is no comprehensive organisation overview of the quality of teaching and learning from which to make comparisons with previous years or set improvement targets for the future.

#### 4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<b>Comments</b>				
<p>Managers responsible for assuring the quality of teaching are well-qualified and focus well on participants' progress. Activities in lessons are well-planned to meet the needs of a diverse age and academic range of participants. There are frequent examples of teachers making last-minute adjustments to programme content to better meet the needs of their participants.</p> <p>Teachers receive a good amount of information relating to participants' academic entry points and higher level study aspirations. They use this information well to plan differentiated activities and lessons to meet their participants' varied needs and interests. Participants' feedback records attest to their high levels of satisfaction with the enthusiasm and knowledge of their teachers. On the very rare occasion that participants express any concerns, decisive action is promptly taken to ensure that this does not happen again.</p>				

#### 4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<b>Comments</b>				
<p>Participant welfare is paramount to the Provider. The ratio of staff to participant numbers is generous for example, in some lessons, two teachers are provided, or additional supervisors allocated, to ensure learning and safety are optimised.</p>				

Learners have access to staff contact telephone numbers both during their study day and out of hours and they are safely housed in well-supervised accommodation where they board with other participants of the same age.

Participants benefit from a comprehensive range of wider learning, personal development and enrichment opportunities such as architectural tours of Cambridge, a trip to the Globe theatre in London and the opportunity to undertake the Young Leaders programme. Participants' evaluations of these activities are highly positive. Where participants' feedback is not so positive, managers respond quickly to ensure that appropriate improvements are made.

Safeguarding arrangements are comprehensive and robust. Staff are trained to the relevant level. There is no summary overview of the training that staff have undertaken.

Participants are kept safe and their behaviour is excellent. Staff and learners are mindful of their responsibility to represent RC well.

Access arrangements are sound and there are good examples of the Provider's responsiveness to participants' circumstances, for example a participant with a broken leg was enabled to take full part in her programme.

#### 4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<b>Comments</b>				
Premises remain of a good standard, they are well-kept and clean and fully comply with safety regulations.				

**PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS**

<b>STRENGTHS</b>
The senior leadership team is cohesive, collaborative and responsive.
Teaching and learning are of a high quality, using highly qualified, experienced and engaging teachers.
Programmes are well-designed to offer participants a well-rounded mix of academic and personal development opportunities.
Programmes are designed to enable participants to benefit from the wider learning and development that arises from mixing with participants across a wide range of ages and cultures.

<b>ACTIONS REQUIRED</b>	<b>Priority H/M/L</b>
None	

<b>RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT</b>
It is recommended that the RC places its information about physical access to the premises in a more prominent area of the website to more effectively promote its emphasis on accessibility.
It is recommended that RC adopts a more forensic approach to the gathering and use of data, to more fully inform its annual senior leaders’ report and then share its report more widely with its team.
It is recommended that RC considers gathering appropriate evidence that their programmes have a positive impact on participants’ success in examination results and/or their progression to university.
It is recommended that senior leaders compile an annual teaching and learning report that uses the full range of evidence at its disposal, and clearly articulates the strengths and areas for improvement of its teaching and learning, so that year-on-year comparisons can be made.
It is recommended that the current safeguarding summary, single central record, be expanded to incorporate an overview of relevant staff training.

<b>COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS</b>	
Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	<b>YES</b>
Further comments, if applicable	