

# ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK



RAISING STANDARDS IN THE  
GLOBAL EDUCATION MARKET

# **ACCREDITATION HANDBOOK**

**Welcome to the British Accreditation Council**

**Since 1984, we have been responsible for setting standards within the independent further and higher education sector, and our accreditation is held by many institutions in the UK and overseas.**

We provide the leading mark of educational quality for the sector, which is used by students, parents, agencies, and beyond as a guarantee of standards.

In this handbook, you will find the latest information, updates, and documentation needed for achieving and retaining accreditation, along with details relating to the additional services and support BAC provides.

**If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.**



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# 1. INTRODUCTION TO BAC

The British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education (BAC) was established as a joint initiative between the British Council and the Department of Education in 1984. It is a registered charity and a 'not for profit' organisation.

The original BAC remit was to oversee the further and higher education sectors in the United Kingdom (UK) and to ensure that educational and governance standards within the sector were rigorous. BAC was also charged with raising educational and governance standards across the sector.

Such a remit was achieved by developing a set of standards against which organisations would be judged and accredited.

Today, BAC accredits more than 230 organisations across the world (although most accredited organisations are in the UK). BAC is increasingly involved in the accreditation of higher education organisations across the UK and internationally and has developed a unique capability to work with a broad range of further and higher education organisations.

In addition to our accreditation activities, we are increasingly involved in international consultancy, through which we provide innovative quality assurance solutions for educational organisations and businesses.

We have also worked with governments and NGOs in Bahrain, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, and Singapore on capacity-building projects designed to improve governance and outcomes in further and higher education.

Within the UK, BAC holds a statutory responsibility in that all BAC-accredited organisations can accept international students on academic or vocational courses for up to six months under the short-term study visa arrangements in the UK.

BAC is a full member of the following organisations:

- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
- International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

BAC is listed on the:

- European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

BAC is an affiliate member of the:

- Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

## 1.1 THE PURPOSES OF ACCREDITATION

In awarding accreditation, BAC has four main purposes:



### **TO PROVIDE ASSURANCE**

of the good standing of an institution.



### **TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE**

for anyone seeking to undertake training, vocational programmes, and further or higher education in an organisation.



### **TO SUPPORT AND ADVISE**

organisations offering training, vocational programmes, and further or higher education in the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of their provision.



### **TO INCREASE MARKET DIFFERENTIATION**

BAC accreditation enables an organisation to show that it has voluntarily undergone independent inspection and has met BAC's globally recognised standards.

## 1.2 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The award of accreditation is subject to an organisation meeting the standards that BAC has established and periodically reviews. The accreditation process involves a rigorous on-site inspection that focuses on the quality assurance processes of the organisation in a number of distinct areas: management, staffing, and administration; teaching, learning, and assessment; student welfare; and premises and facilities. Details of the minimum standards for each of these areas are included in the individual scheme documents that can be found on the BAC website.

Before accreditation is awarded, not only must an organisation meet and continue to meet the specific minimum standards listed for each of the inspection areas, but the inspection report must also indicate that the overall standard of provision in each area is satisfactory.

Once accredited, your organisation must submit to a regular monitoring process involving annual data returns and interim, supplementary, and spot-check inspections. You must also pay all applicable fees and maintain a transparent and constructive relationship with BAC by notifying us of any changes, responding to any requests for information, and cooperating with BAC's procedures for investigating student complaints (see Section 10 of this handbook).

An essential requirement of BAC accreditation is that all organisations continue to meet their statutory obligations to comply with all relevant laws and regulations.

## 1.3 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

**Any education organisation is eligible for accreditation provided that the following requirements are met:**

- The organisation offers training, vocational, and further or higher education programmes.
- The organisation is able to provide evidence of its financial stability.
- Effective control of the organisation is the responsibility of an accountable management.
- The organisation is led by a proprietor or designated principal/director, who must be legally resident in its main country of operation and have clear contractual responsibilities for the running of the organisation and for the quality of its work.
- There are no grounds for believing that the proprietor, principal/director, or any other senior manager is unfit to be in charge of the organisation. Such grounds may include an assessment of any previous position held at another organisation known to BAC, in particular any organisation that

consistently failed to meet BAC's standards or failed to pay debts owed to BAC.

Specific eligibility criteria for the different accreditation schemes can be found within the appropriate scheme document.

### **INELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS**

**The following organisation type will not normally be considered eligible for accreditation:**

→ Organisations that are solely or predominantly providers of full-time education for students of compulsory school age (i.e. 16 years and under).

Such organisations are normally unsuitable for BAC accreditation because more appropriate alternatives exist, i.e. a government-regulated quality assurance framework for schools and publicly funded organisations.

## **1.4 THE ACCREDITATION CYCLE**

- An organisation registers their interest by submitting a completed Enquiry Form.
- BAC aims to complete an initial due diligence check within five working days; if satisfied, we will invite the organisation to an online meeting in order to discuss the organisation, go through the accreditation process, and respond to any queries the organisation may have.
- If the organisation wishes to go forward, it registers its application by paying the non-refundable Application Fee.
- BAC will raise an invoice for the Application Fee and Inspection Management Fee.
- The organisation submits its application with all supporting documentation and pays the Inspection Management Fee within 14 days of the invoice being sent.
- BAC aims to conduct an initial review of the application within ten working days and will liaise with the organisation until satisfied that the organisation meets the eligibility requirements. Further due diligence is conducted at this stage.
- If the application process for new applicants cannot be completed within six months as a result of a failure to submit the necessary documentation, BAC reserves the right to request the organisation to start the process again, and an additional application fee will be due.
- An on-site inspection is conducted of all premises and facilities under consideration for BAC accreditation by a specialist inspector or inspection team.
- An inspection report is drawn up and submitted to the Accreditation Committee.
- BAC notifies the organisation of the Accreditation Committee's decision.

The Accreditation Committee makes one of three decisions:

- Award accreditation — this can be full, candidacy, or probation.
- Defer a decision — a time period is set for the organisation to work on the relevant action point(s) and undergo a new inspection.
- Refuse accreditation — if accreditation is refused, an organisation must wait for a minimum of 24 months before applying again.

An interim inspection will be carried out by the twelfth month in an organisation's first cycle; then, for all subsequent accreditation cycles, the interim inspection is between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> month.

An organisation is required to submit an annual data return. BAC will contact all accredited organisations once a year, requesting student or course data, and a deadline will be set for the submission of the information. Invoices for annual accreditation fees are generated by BAC based on the data submitted.

An organisation that fails to submit its annual data return may be subject to additional charges.

All schemes have a four-year cycle.

The following schemes can be considered for organisations based in the UK or overseas:

- Short Course Provider (SCP)
- Online, Distance and Blended Learning (ODBL)
- International English Language Provider (IELP)
- Independent Higher Education (IHE).

The following scheme can be considered for organisations based in the UK only:

- College

The following scheme can be considered for organisations based overseas only:

- International Centre (IC)

### **END OF ACCREDITATION**

Six months prior to the cycle expiry date, BAC will contact the organisation and invite them to apply for reaccreditation. Organisations applying for reaccreditation will be set a submission deadline, which they must adhere to in order to ensure a smooth continuation of accreditation.

Failure to meet the application submission deadline or to respond to BAC requests for any missing or additional information may lead to accreditation being withdrawn.

All organisations applying for reaccreditation must undergo a full inspection. In considering an inspection report on an accredited organisation, the Accreditation Committee may:

- Award reaccreditation for another four years
- Award probation accreditation for six or twelve months
- Defer a decision pending the resolution of important issues
- Withdraw accreditation from the organisation should it have failed to maintain the standards required.

Any organisation that has been unsuccessful in either gaining or retaining accreditation may appeal against the decision of the Accreditation Committee (see Section 9 of this handbook).

## **1.5 HOW BAC OPERATES**

Strategy, governance, and accreditation decisions are managed by four committees, with day-to-day management conducted through the head office staff, whereas the BAC inspectorate is responsible for conducting inspections.

### **Council**

The Council comprises the trustees for the charity, who also act as the company's board of directors. The Council is responsible for overseeing the strategy and governance of the company. A full meeting of the Council is held three times a year.

### **Standing Committee**

The Standing Committee is comprised of the Council Chair, Council Deputy Chair, and the Treasurer. The Committee has authority delegated from the Council/Board of Trustees to consider proposals that require Council/Board of Trustees approval; to consider and scrutinise budget proposals and BAC annual and strategic plans; to deal with any matters requiring urgent consideration; and to provide oversight of BAC compliance with ENQA and EQAR requirements.

### **Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee is comprised of the Treasurer and two other trustees and may include an external nominee to bring a particular expertise to the audit process. The Committee has authority delegated from the Council/Board of Trustees to scrutinise the annual accounts in preparation for

their presentation to the Council/Board of Trustees, to review the BAC Risk Register, and to monitor BAC's financial performance

### **Accreditation Committee**

The Accreditation Committee (or an agreed sub-committee of its members) is an independent committee with full authority delegated from the Council to award, refuse, defer, or withdraw accreditation.

It discharges this duty after considering the reports of inspections carried out on organisations, with the range of possible decisions set out in Section 7 of this handbook. The individual criteria that inform the decisions can be found in the scheme documents.

In addition to making case-by-case decisions on the accreditation of organisations, the Accreditation Committee also has responsibility for keeping BAC's accreditation conditions, standards, and criteria under review. Any changes considered appropriate will be recommended to the Council for ratification. Further terms of reference for the Accreditation Committee are available on request from the BAC office.

### **Head Office Staff**

BAC's committees and inspectors are supported by a core team of administrative staff at the head office in London. Led by the CEO, the staff are responsible for the day-to-day running of BAC's business, including management of inspections, oversight of accredited organisations, administration of the Council and the Accreditation Committee, and communication with the public and with education sectors.

### **The Inspectorate**

BAC has an inspectorate consisting of experienced technical experts. Inspection teams are selected on the basis of qualities that include sector experience (especially in quality assurance at a senior level) and subject specialism to ensure a level of knowledge appropriate to each particular organisation.

The Chief Inspector maintains oversight of the entire inspection process and advises on the ongoing development of inspection policies and processes, including team selection, monitoring of reports, inspector training, and the ongoing development of inspection processes, standards, and criteria for the accreditation schemes.

## **1.6 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND INFORMATION SHARING**

While BAC is a non-governmental organisation and a registered charity, overseeing a voluntary accreditation scheme, it plays a key role in the education sector, which requires close and transparent collaboration with local authorities, central government, its agencies, and other bodies concerned with standards in further and higher education.

BAC's Council receives detailed reports on BAC activities at its meetings. The Council does not ordinarily receive inspection reports or other organisation-specific information.

BAC has transparent broader information-sharing protocols with which specific data can be shared about organisations in which the body has a legitimate interest. By submitting an application for accreditation, all organisations acknowledge and agree to these arrangements.

Bodies with which BAC may share such organisation-specific data include The Department for Education and the UK Visa and Immigration Department (UKVI).

To comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), BAC does not share accredited organisations' employees' personal data with external bodies. For further details regarding how BAC uses data, please refer to BAC's Privacy Policy at [www.the-bac.org/privacy-policy](http://www.the-bac.org/privacy-policy).

## 2. ACCREDITATION SCHEMES

BAC has a number of accreditation schemes, each with its own documentation regarding eligibility, accreditation standards and cycle, the inspection process, fees, accreditation marks, and minimum standards.

A short summary of each scheme is outlined below.

Further information can be found in the appropriate accreditation scheme document on the BAC website or by talking to BAC staff.

### 2.1 SHORT COURSE PROVIDER (SCP)

Short course providers offer a range of short, part-time, or full-time training courses that could cover a variety of professional and leisure subjects and could be delivered in an environment different from that of a college. The short course provider accreditation scheme is available for training providers where the courses at the organisation run for up to 26 weeks.

This scheme is for UK- or overseas-based organisations.

### 2.2 ONLINE, DISTANCE AND BLENDED LEARNING (ODBL)

BAC's online, distance and blended learning scheme is appropriate if an organisation provides courses delivered through online, distance, or blended learning means. The process of application, inspection, and accreditation has been adapted to assess this type of provision.

The inspection will include an on-site visit.

Whether there is face-to-face delivery or not, BAC will always inspect the operational premises of an online organisation as our scheme reviews staff welfare aspects.

This scheme is for UK- or overseas-based organisations.

### 2.3 COLLEGE

While the same standards are required for all organisations accredited under this scheme, the range of provision on offer is very broad and includes:

- Adult education and skills for life
- Business and professional education
- Creative and performing arts
- Specialist vocational training
- Study abroad placements
- Tutorial colleges
- University preparation
- Non-degree HE programmes.

BAC's college accreditation scheme covers the full range of the organisation's provision and is not restricted to specific courses. This accreditation does not extend to activities that take place outside the organisation itself, for instance franchised programmes, satellite summer schools, or separate branches that are promoted and delivered under a different name, unless BAC has given specific approval for the inclusion of such activities within the organisation's accreditation.

This scheme is for UK-based organisations only.

#### **2.4 INTERNATIONAL CENTRE (IC)**

BAC's International Centre (IC) accreditation scheme is for organisations based outside the UK. The scheme caters for organisations that offer a range of short, part-time, or full-time courses of a flexible nature or that offer a provision similar to UK-based organisations accredited under the college accreditation scheme.

This scheme is for organisations based outside the UK only.

#### **2.5 INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROVIDER (IELP)**

BAC's International English Language Provider (IELP) scheme is for organisations that purely cater for EFL/ESOL learners. The provision must include recognised examination preparatory classes, for example IELTS, TOEFL Cambridge Suite, or LanguageCert preparation. For a full list of examinations, please see the scheme document.

This scheme is for UK- or overseas-based organisations.

#### **2.6 INDEPENDENT HIGHER EDUCATION (IHE)**

The Independent Higher Education Organisation (IHEI) accreditation scheme is designed for those organisations that deliver full recognised degree programmes. The organisation should hold degree awarding powers or be in partnership with a recognised degree awarding organisation. The organisation may offer other courses such as Higher Education (HE), professional, or short courses as well as full recognised degree programmes.

The inspection standards and key indicators are intended to be specific to the delivery of HE (particularly British HE) and are, in part, informed by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and the responsibilities of partner organisations as set out in the Handbook for the Quality Management of Collaborative Provision developed by the Council of Validating Universities.

This scheme is for UK- or overseas-based organisations.

All organisations are assessed against the full set of accreditation standards described in the relevant accreditation scheme document and must meet all the minimum standards. Documents outlining these minimum standards and other scheme details are available on request from the BAC office or available to download from the BAC website.

## 3. BENEFITS OF BAC ACCREDITATION

### 3.1 BENEFITS TO ORGANISATIONS

#### **MARK OF QUALITY**

BAC is an independent, well-established, and globally recognised national accreditation body, as evidenced by its membership of ENQA and its listing on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). Once accredited, an organisation can display the appropriate BAC logo and accreditation statement on their publicity materials.

#### **LISTING ON BAC-ACCREDITED ORGANISATION DIRECTORY**

Accreditation by BAC means that accredited organisations will be listed on the BAC website, providing information for external agencies, partners, and prospective students about the organisation and courses offered.

#### **MARKETING SUPPORT PACK**

Accredited organisations are provided with free marketing resources to support stakeholder engagement, marketing campaigns, and business development activities.

#### **STAYING INFORMED**

Continual advice and updates on sector changes are provided by regular newsletters, posts on the BAC website, and via social media sites.

#### **INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT**

For organisations registered and operating in the UK, BAC accreditation entitles them to enrol international students on Short-Term Study Visas for courses of up to six months.

#### **WEBINAR SERVICE**

Accredited organisations will receive invitations to join webinars that cover a variety of topics designed for the education sector and for developing an organisation's quality assurance standards.

#### **RAISING STANDARDS**

BAC inspections are conducted by highly experienced inspectors with extensive knowledge of the sector. They can provide accredited organisations with invaluable advice on their quality assurance processes through the inspection process.

### 3.2 BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

Selecting one of BAC's accredited organisations provides students with additional security and support, knowing that they are attending an organisation that has voluntarily undergone an independent review to show that they meet globally-recognised educational standards.

→ Choosing a BAC-accredited organisation provides students, their families, and other stakeholders with assurance that all areas of provision meet the standards set out in this handbook and accompanying scheme documents.

→ If an accredited organisation does not continue to meet BAC's published standards, students may seek support and advice through BAC's complaints procedure (see Section 10 of this handbook), which provides them with additional assurance about the operation of a BAC-accredited organisation.

## 4. THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

Accreditation is based on an inspection of the full range of your organisation's provision. BAC also requires evidence that your management maintains acceptable standards and meets its legal and compliance obligations during the accreditation period.

As detailed in Section 1.4 of this handbook, BAC will carry out due diligence of an organisation at the enquiry and application stages. Once the application stage has been completed, a rigorous inspection is conducted to assess the provision against the minimum standards set out in the relevant scheme document. An on-site inspection must be carried out for all premises that are to be considered for accreditation.

While BAC's inspectors and staff always attempt to offer helpful advice, you should bear in mind that BAC is primarily an inspection body, and therefore in applying for accreditation, you must be prepared to accept constructive criticism of your provision as well as positive comment on good practice.

If an accredited organisation wishes to amend the type or scope of its accreditation, a formal request and rationale will be required. BAC will then consider whether a further inspection is required before such a change can be granted.

### 4.1 SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION

As BAC accredits organisations in their entirety, all provision must be declared so that it can be considered with the application and assessed in the course of subsequent inspections.

While accreditation applies to an organisation as a whole, BAC can only assess the provision in place at the time of application, which makes it essential for an accredited organisation to notify BAC should any significant changes take place, or be planned, so that students and other interested parties can be confident that accreditation constitutes a comprehensive and current evaluation of an organisation.

BAC does not accredit courses or programmes. The BAC name or logo may not be used to imply that your course or programme has been approved by BAC.

BAC accreditation is a rigorous process involving several stages before successful completion, taking between three to six months from the date of application to the award of accreditation. However, how long it actually takes is largely dependent on the quality of the initial application and the accreditation scheme. BAC will allocate timeframes to organisations to work towards in order to offer the best possible opportunity for organisations to complete the accreditation process in a timely manner.

### 4.2 COST OF ACCREDITATION

Full details of the fees associated with inspection and accreditation are available on the BAC website and upon request to the BAC office.

#### **The main costs involved are:**

- Application fee (standard and non-refundable); this is only applicable to non-BAC-accredited applying organisations
- Inspection Management fee (variable, depending on the accreditation scheme)
- Inspection fee (variable, depending on the type and scope of inspection required)
- Annual accreditation fee (variable, depending on the size of your organisation and the type of accreditation awarded)

- Cost of interim inspection
- Cost of a reaccreditation inspection every four years
- Inspection fee for any additional inspection(s) required by BAC (after either a significant change at the organisation or failure to comply with BAC regulations for accredited organisations).

## 5. APPLICATION

### 5.1 APPLYING FOR ACCREDITATION

If an organisation is considering submitting an application for accreditation, the key staff members who will be involved in gaining and maintaining BAC accreditation should first read this Accreditation Handbook and the relevant scheme documents and ensure that the application process, the standard of provision required, and the responsibilities of holding BAC accreditation are understood.

Prior to preparing an application, BAC will have confirmed the most appropriate scheme and sent out the application paperwork.

Once the terms and conditions set out in the Accreditation Handbook and associated documentation have been read, understood, and accepted, preparations for making an application should begin.

A significant amount of documentation for making an application will need to be collated — there is a checklist for the supplementary evidence included in the application form. For the on-site inspection, a list of documents required for each inspection area is included in each scheme document at the end of each inspection area.

For organisations catering for under 18s, further checks are required. A full checklist of information and documentation required is included in the application form.

#### **The documentation for application for accreditation comprises:**

- The application form
- Required supporting documentation
- Payment covering the inspection management fee.

The instructions on the application form should be followed closely, making use of the associated guidance notes where needed, in order to complete the form and its appendices with all the necessary information, as well as gathering the required supporting documentation. All sections of the application form should be carefully completed.

Please contact the BAC office if you have any queries about the completion of the application form.

When an application is ready for submission, please pay the application fee. This will initiate the application process. BAC will then send out an invoice for the application and inspection management fees. The application should be submitted within 21 days of the invoice along with the inspection management fee payment.

Please submit the application electronically or via a USB stick. Alternatively, a hard copy can be submitted by post to the BAC office.

We cannot complete the processing of an application until all the required documentation has been received, along with full payment of the application and inspection management fees.

## 5.2 APPLICATION FOR CANDIDACY ACCREDITATION

If the applying organisation has been operating for less than twelve months and has not yet recruited any students, or if the applying organisation is a summer school, it may be possible to apply to BAC for 'candidate for accreditation' status.

Accredited organisations may also apply for candidacy accreditation, subject to approval from BAC, if they do not have any courses running within three months of their accreditation expiry date.

The 'candidate for accreditation' process is only available under either the College or the Short Course Provider schemes. Please note the following points:

- The status of 'approved candidate for BAC accreditation' can be awarded following a candidacy inspection.
- An organisation will be approved as a 'candidate for BAC accreditation' if the Accreditation Committee is satisfied that the organisation meets BAC's minimum standards for candidate accreditation on premises and management and that the required documentation relevant to student welfare and robust quality assurance procedures is in place.
- 'Approved candidate' status is awarded for a period of six months following a successful candidacy inspection, during which time BAC will arrange a full accreditation inspection.
- If an organisation 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. Requests for an extension of accreditation must be received before the expiry date of approved candidate accreditation.

## 5.3 APPLICATION PROCESSING

An application pack is sent out by BAC for newly applying organisations and those seeking reaccreditation. With the application form, there is also guidance on completing the form, a supporting document checklist, a self-evaluation report, guidance on how to complete the self-evaluation report, and a copy of BAC's terms and conditions, which is to be signed and returned with the application.

Confirmation of receipt will be sent within three working days of an application being received.

Processing an application may take up to several weeks to allow for proper scrutiny. If additional information and/or documentation are requested, please be prompt in responding in order to reduce delays in processing.

This formal evaluation process is undertaken by trained BAC staff and will begin with a review of the application form and accompanying documentation in order to establish proof that the applying organisation is eligible for accreditation under the accreditation scheme applied for. This will be followed by further investigation of public records, the taking up of professional and personal references, credit checks (if deemed appropriate), and scrutiny of the applying organisation's website and other promotional material.

A BAC staff member may make contact to seek clarification or request additional documentation if the submission is incomplete, if there are discrepancies in the information, or if elements of the organisation's provision do not meet BAC's requirements. There will be no further progress until these matters have been satisfactorily resolved.

Once all the outstanding issues have been resolved and BAC considers the application complete, confirmation that the application has been moved to Inspection Planning will be sent.

New applications remain live for up to six months, whereas reaccreditation applications remain live for three months. Should an application not be considered complete before the end of this period,

the applying organisation may be asked to submit a new application, which will incur an additional application fee.

#### **5.4 REACCREDITATION APPLICATIONS**

Accredited organisations wishing to retain accreditation must submit an application for reaccreditation and undergo a full reaccreditation inspection every four years.

BAC expects that accredited organisations will develop and improve their quality assurance processes over the period of accreditation.

BAC will also hold information about accredited organisations from submitted annual returns and other sources, which will contribute to the reaccreditation inspection.

BAC will contact an organisation six months before the accreditation is due to expire, setting out the application procedure for reaccreditation and the application deadline.

The deadline will normally be three months before the expiry date of the current accreditation.

To remain in accreditation, we must receive a reaccreditation application by the stated deadline, comprising the following completed documents:

- Reaccreditation application form
- Data collection form
- Required supporting documentation (see relevant scheme or criteria document)
- Completed self-evaluation report
- Payment of inspection management fee.

A reaccreditation application form with guidance notes will be sent when BAC invites an organisation to apply for reaccreditation. All sections of the application form should be carefully completed, and an electronic copy should be submitted to BAC.

A reaccreditation inspection will be organised only if BAC has received a completed application for reaccreditation along with full payment of all fees by the deadline given.

Should an accredited organisation fail to undergo a reaccreditation inspection before their current accreditation expiry date and without having been granted an extension by the Accreditation Committee, their accreditation will be withdrawn.

Organisations will develop and expand, which may mean that the accreditation scheme an organisation was assessed under may no longer be the most appropriate scheme. Please contact the BAC office to discuss changing accreditation schemes.

#### **5.5 WITHDRAWN OR REFUSED ACCREDITATION**

If the Accreditation Committee has refused accreditation to a new organisation or withdrawn accreditation from an organisation, the organisation is free to reapply after the set time period given by the Committee, usually 24 months. BAC reserves the right to adjust the minimum period of time.

## 6. INSPECTIONS

### 6.1 THE INSPECTION PROCESS

The primary method for assessing whether an organisation meets the standards required for accreditation is an on-site inspection carried out by an independent inspector or inspection team who are appointed and trained by BAC.

No organisation will be awarded full accreditation or reaccreditation without a full inspection of its provision in all of the areas outlined in the relevant scheme document.

**In addition to the full accreditation and reaccreditation inspections that follow applications by organisations, a number of other inspections are organised by BAC for specific reasons, including:**

- Interim monitoring inspections of accredited organisations during the period of accreditation
- Supplementary inspections of accredited organisations that have undergone significant changes, for example in management, provision, or premises and facilities
- Supplementary inspections of organisations following a request for one by the Accreditation Committee
- Spot-check inspections of accredited organisations for BAC's monitoring purposes or due to a complaint being made of a serious enough nature that BAC feels an on-site inspection is necessary.

While BAC's inspections are key to assessing whether or not an organisation should be accredited or reaccredited, they are also intended to provide advice and guidance on the organisation's own framework of quality assurance and how this may be improved. The inspectors used are all educational experts with extensive knowledge of the sector, and they will be happy to share examples of best practice and suggest ways in which an organisation can continue to improve its provision in line with and beyond BAC's minimum standards.

Once BAC has authorised an inspection to go ahead and determined the appropriate size and composition of the inspection team, BAC will confirm the inspection dates. Accreditation or reaccreditation inspections will be scheduled on days when the largest sample of training/teaching can be observed.

BAC is required to give its inspectors at least three weeks' notice of an inspection.

The final decision about the dates on which an inspection will take place and whether it will go ahead rests with BAC, but if the inspection dates fall on days when there is no teaching or key management members are unavailable, the organisation must notify BAC immediately in order to arrange new inspection dates.

### **SELECTING THE INSPECTION TEAM**

The inspector or the inspection team is carefully selected by BAC staff, taking into account their sector experience, quality assurance and educational inspection experience, and their subject specialisms. BAC's inspectors and the head of the organisation being inspected are required to sign a declaration identifying any conflicts of interest and to observe confidentiality with regard to the process and the outcome of the inspection. The organisation is informed of the names of the inspectors before the inspection.

The size of the inspection team will depend on the size and diversity of the organisation and its provision. The Lead Inspector (LI) will be responsible for determining the schedule for the inspection and for producing the final inspection report for consideration by the Accreditation Committee.

For full inspections conducted under the Independent Higher Education scheme, a Student Inspector

is included.

### **PREPARING FOR AN INSPECTION**

When an application has been processed and passed to inspection planning, an Inspection Planning Pack is sent out, which includes guidance on how to prepare for the on-site visit. A webinar on how to prepare for an inspection is also available.

Once an inspection has been organised, you will receive written confirmation of the dates, the names of the inspectors, and details of the inspection, including a list of the premises to be visited.

The LI will contact the organisation to arrange all the details of the inspection. It is the intention of the inspectors to avoid disruption to normal activities as much as possible during the inspection. Where relevant, the LI will ask the organisation to supply a full timetable for classes taking place during the inspection, including breaks, so that the inspector can see the times at which the students and key personnel will be available to meet the inspector(s). The LI will take this information into account when putting together the inspection timetable. The LI will submit the inspection timetable to the organisation prior to the inspection. The organisation will review this and suggest amendments if required. However, the LI is responsible for producing the final inspection timetable in order to ensure that it meets the needs of the inspection team and allows all the standards of the relevant scheme to be fully assessed.

### **SELF-EVALUATION**

For full and reaccreditation inspections, organisations are required to complete and submit a self-evaluation report assessing their quality assurance mechanisms against BAC's minimum standards prior to the inspection. This is a key document that helps the inspector(s) plan the inspection appropriately. Failure to submit this to BAC before the inspection may result in the inspection being cancelled and additional costs being incurred. Organisations are provided with guidance on completing the self-evaluation report in the application pack. Further guidance, including webinars, is available upon request.

### **PAYING FOR THE INSPECTION**

All inspections are subject to an inspection fee payable by the organisation to BAC. Details of the fees for each type of inspection can be found in the fees brochure that is published separately. The inspection fee is payable before the inspection takes place.

In all cases, the inspection report and any decision of the Accreditation Committee will not be released until the fee has been paid in full.

### **CANCELLING AN INSPECTION**

BAC reserves the right to cancel the inspection or change the date or the identity of the inspectors prior to the commencement of the inspection. Please note that BAC would only make such changes once all other options have been exhausted and where it would be impossible or detrimental to go ahead with the inspection as planned.

If an inspection is cancelled by the organisation within four weeks of the start of the inspection, a cancellation fee is payable. The same cancellation fee is payable by the organisation if an inspection is cancelled by BAC because the organisation has either failed to agree to an inspection timetable with the inspection team or failed to submit any documentation requested in advance, including the completed self-evaluation report.

If the date of an inspection is changed or cancelled by the organisation, then they are liable for any costs already incurred by the inspectors.

## **6.2 TYPES OF INSPECTION**

## **FULL INSPECTION**

Organisations applying for accreditation that have been established for more than 12 months or have already begun teaching students enrolled on their courses will undergo a single, full accreditation inspection. A full inspection will assess whether the organisation meets BAC's minimum standards in each of the areas of provision as detailed in the relevant scheme document. However, the purpose of the inspection is not only to assess what can be observed during the days of the inspection but also to consider evidence that satisfactory standards are likely to be maintained in the longer term.

**While the exact nature of an inspection is likely to vary according to the size and complexity of the provision, there are elements common to all inspections:**

- Introductory meeting with senior staff
- A tour of the premises
- Individual meetings with academic and managerial staff
- Scrutiny of documentation and relevant databases and other electronic systems
- A meeting with a representative group of students (if applicable)
- Observation of a representative sample of classes (if applicable)
- A final meeting with the head of the organisation to provide feedback on the findings of the inspection. The feedback will not include any information as to whether the outcome will lead to accreditation, since the final decision lies entirely with BAC's Accreditation Committee or a designated sub-committee of its members.

## **STAGED INSPECTIONS**

New organisations based in the UK applying for College or Short Course Provider accreditation that have been in operation for less than 12 months and have not yet begun classes may undergo a staged inspection process.

SCP or College accredited organisations applying for reaccreditation may be eligible for a staged inspection if they do not have any courses booked for up to three months after their current accreditation expiry date.

Please note that BAC will make the final decision about whether an organisation should undergo a single inspection or staged inspections.

## **THE CANDIDACY INSPECTION (CANDIDACY INSPECTION)**

If a staged process is deemed appropriate, the first inspection (the candidacy inspection) will focus upon compliance with the minimum standards for premises and facilities, management, staffing, and administration and documentation relevant to student welfare. The inspector(s) will also make an initial assessment of academic resources in light of an organisation's advertised academic programmes.

This will normally be a one-day inspection carried out by a single inspector, depending on the size of the organisation and the number of sites at which it operates.

If the decision of the Accreditation Committee is positive, the organisation will be awarded the status of 'approved candidate for BAC accreditation' for six months.

## **THE ACCREDITATION INSPECTION (FULL INSPECTION)**

The second inspection (the accreditation inspection) will focus on the quality of the educational provision and the organisation's procedures to monitor and enhance the quality of its provision. The inspector(s) will also review the areas inspected during the first inspection.

This will normally entail a two-day inspection by one inspector, depending on the size of the organisation and the number of sites to be inspected.

If the decision of the Accreditation Committee is positive, the organisation will be awarded the status of BAC accreditation for the full length of the accreditation cycle, i.e. four-years.

### **INTERIM INSPECTION**

All accredited organisations are required to undergo an interim inspection halfway through each accreditation cycle.

Interim inspections are designed to ensure that the minimum standards required for accreditation are being maintained and to assess an organisation's progress in responding to any action points and any recommendations listed in their last inspection report.

The interim inspection also provides an opportunity for discussion with the inspector regarding any changes that have taken place since the previous inspection and any planned developments.

For newly accredited organisations, the interim inspection will occur within the first twelve months of gaining accreditation.

For accredited organisations, it will be organised midway through the cycle.

BAC reserves the right to bring forward or delay an interim inspection if deemed necessary.

A standard interim inspection is normally carried out by one inspector over one day, depending on the size of the organisation and its provision.

Following an interim inspection, the report will be considered by the Accreditation Committee (or a sub-committee of its members), which will decide if:

- Accreditation should continue
- Accreditation should be amended (i.e. the organisation is put on probation)
- Accreditation should be placed in abeyance (i.e. the organisation is suspended while a full investigation is undertaken. The use of the BAC name or logo may not be used while accreditation is in abeyance)
- Accreditation should be withdrawn.

The organisation will be required to pay for this inspection. BAC follows a strict policy to ensure the cost to the organisation is fair and transparent.

If the decision of the Accreditation Committee is positive, the organisation will be approved for continued accreditation.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION**

A supplementary inspection will normally be carried out either at the request of the Accreditation Committee or after a significant change, for example in the premises and facilities, management, or academic programme.

Depending on the exact scope of the inspection, this is normally carried out by one inspector over either one or half a day. Organisations will be required to pay for this inspection.

An interim inspection may be combined with a supplementary inspection if appropriate. The final decision about whether inspections can be combined lies entirely with BAC.

If the decision of the Accreditation Committee is positive, the organisation will be approved for continued accreditation.

## **SPOT-CHECK INSPECTION**

A spot check is an inspection outside the normal accreditation process. Depending on the reason for the spot check, BAC may or may not give prior notification of its intention to carry it out. Spot checks are conducted at the expense of BAC.

### **There are two kinds of spot-check inspections:**

→ Spot-check inspections are carried out on a number of accredited organisations selected at random as part of BAC's ongoing monitoring processes.

→ A spot-check inspection may be ordered at the discretion of BAC, the reasons for which may include:

- A complaint of a serious nature
- Failure to submit an annual return by the deadline
- Failure to notify BAC of a significant change
- Failure to respond promptly to a request for information
- Failure to cooperate fully and promptly with BAC's complaints procedure
- Specific intelligence received from one of the bodies with which BAC shares information
- Receipt of any other evidence that an organisation is not maintaining the minimum

standards or agreed obligations required for accreditation.

If the decision of the Accreditation Committee is positive, the organisation will be approved for continued accreditation.

## **6.3 ACCREDITATION AND EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT BODIES**

Organisations that hold whole organisation accreditation with a recognised accrediting body — such as QAA, Accreditation UK, ISI, or Ofsted — or have received a 'confidence' judgement from one of the educational oversight bodies designated by the Home Office can submit any inspection or audit reports for information purposes only.

An organisation that has undergone a full inspection with an alternative accrediting body will still need to complete a full inspection, if one is due, by BAC. The BAC mark cannot be awarded to any organisation that has not undergone the full BAC process.

If an organisation is undergoing an inspection with an alternative awarding body at the same time that BAC has requested the accreditation application to be submitted or the on-site inspection is due to take place, the organisation may request the BAC inspection to be delayed or be brought forward. Please contact BAC to apply for a deferment. If deferment of the inspection is longer than three months, the request must be approved by the Accreditation Committee.

## **6.4 COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS**

All new applicants and those applying for reaccreditation are required to sign a declaration stating that the organisation complies with all relevant statutory requirements in connection with:

- health and safety
- safeguarding
- employment law
- copyright
- disability provision
- equal opportunities
- planning consent
- data protection
- public liability.

It is the organisation's responsibility and the personal responsibility of the head of the organisation to

ensure that all requirements are met. BAC inspectors will not inspect the above areas but will note any observed breach of regulations. Any breach may be notified to the Accreditation Committee as a possible judgement of 'no confidence' in the ability of the organisation to self-assess in these matters and may call into question the integrity of the senior management who will have endorsed the declaration. This can be grounds for withdrawal of accreditation.

## 7. THE AWARD OF ACCREDITATION

### 7.1 DECISION ON THE AWARD OF ACCREDITATION

Following all inspections, the inspection report will be considered by the Accreditation Committee, which will make one of the decisions set out below. The Accreditation Committee may, at its discretion, delegate to a sub-committee the consideration of reports. These decisions will be communicated to the organisation, and any decision made by the sub-committee will be reported to the Accreditation Committee at its next meeting.

The Accreditation Committee can decide to award, refuse, or defer a decision on accreditation or reaccreditation or, in exceptional circumstances, withdraw an organisation's accreditation or place it into abeyance while a full investigation is conducted.

Organisations are informed of the outcome within ten working days of the decision made by the Accreditation Committee or the sub-committee, and a copy of the inspection report will be sent along with an accreditation certificate if accreditation or reaccreditation has been awarded.

For newly accredited organisations, a welcome pack and marketing support pack will be sent along with the inspection report.

#### AWARD OF ACCREDITATION

The Accreditation Committee can award three forms of accreditation or reaccreditation:

**Candidacy:** valid for six months. This is awarded to organisations applying for SCP or College accreditation or reaccreditation following a successful Candidacy/Stage 2 inspection.

**Probation:** valid for six or twelve months. Awarded to organisations who have demonstrated that they can meet BAC standards, but the Committee wish to see the organisation prove that they can maintain the standards. An accredited organisation may be awarded probation accreditation following any form of inspection if the inspection raises concerns for the Committee.

**Full:** Awarded to organisations that successfully meet accreditation standards following a full inspection. For all schemes, the accreditation cycle is for four years.

#### DEFERRAL OF A DECISION ON ACCREDITATION

The Accreditation Committee may defer a decision on accreditation, reaccreditation, or candidacy if the inspection report indicates that an organisation has not met all the minimum standards required but that the outstanding issues can be resolved easily within a short period of time.

- A decision can be deferred for up to six months, during which time the organisation must address the mandatory action points identified in the inspection report.
- The Accreditation Committee will require the organisation, before the end of the deferral period, to undergo a supplementary inspection at the organisation's expense, submit documentary evidence that the outstanding action points have been addressed, or undergo both actions.
- The supplementary inspection report or documentary submission will be considered by the Accreditation Committee before the end of the deferral period, and a decision on accreditation,

reaccreditation, probation, or candidacy will then be made.

→ If the supplementary inspection report indicates significant concerns other than those that led to the deferral, the Accreditation Committee may require an additional full inspection at the organisation's expense before making a decision on accreditation, reaccreditation, or candidacy. If necessary, the deferral period may be extended to allow for this to take place.

→ If the organisation fails either to submit satisfactory documentary evidence or to undergo a supplementary inspection before the end of the deferral period, the Accreditation Committee may refuse or withdraw accreditation or approved candidate status. A new application will then be required should the organisation wish to pursue accreditation further.

### **ABEYANCE**

The Accreditation Committee may place an accredited organisation into abeyance if the Accreditation Committee determines that there may be grounds for withdrawal and wants an investigation to be carried out prior to making a final decision. An organisation must remove all reference to BAC and the use of the BAC logo in all its online and printed materials while accreditation is in abeyance. All references to the organisation will be removed from the BAC website and the accredited provider list.

### **REFUSAL OR WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION**

The Accreditation Committee may refuse or withdraw accreditation if the inspection report indicates that an organisation has failed to meet the minimum standards required for accreditation. An organisation must remove all reference to BAC and the use of the BAC logo in all its online and printed materials when accreditation is withdrawn. All references to the organisation will be removed from the BAC website and the accredited provider list.

If accreditation is refused, withdrawn, or placed in abeyance, the reasons will be clearly explained in the inspection report and accompanying letter. The organisation has the right to appeal against the decision (see Section 9 of this handbook).

## **7.2 ACTION POINTS**

The concluding section of an inspection report may contain action points, which are categorised as being of high, medium, or low priority:

→ High priority: Those that the inspector(s) considers necessary to action as a matter of urgency.

→ Medium priority: Those that the inspector(s) considers can be actioned over a longer timeframe and before the next inspection.

→ Low priority: Those that the inspector(s) considers can be actioned over a longer timeframe and before the next inspection but that are a lower priority to address than medium-priority action points.

These action points will be taken into account by the Accreditation Committee when making their decision regarding the award of accreditation or continued accreditation.

An organisation is expected to have addressed all the action points by the time of the next inspection. The Accreditation Committee may request a shorter time period for high or medium action points to be addressed by the organisation. The deadline will be confirmed in the notification letter that accompanies the inspection report sent after the Committee has made its decision. If a shorter time period is set, the organisation may be asked to submit evidence to show that it has met the action points or to undergo a supplementary inspection at the organisation's cost.

## **7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The inspection report may contain recommendations for further improvement. These are intended to help the organisation develop and improve but do not result in a standard not being met and may not be directly related to any particular standard.

The organisation must review all the recommendations prior to the next inspection. It is expected that organisations will address the recommendations unless there is an acceptable reason, supported by evidence, as to why a recommendation is either not appropriate or not applicable.

#### **7.4 AFTER ACCREDITATION IS AWARDED**

Following the award of accreditation, the use of the BAC logo and statement of accreditation will be permitted, and the organisation will be listed in the BAC directory of accredited organisations on the BAC website. Access to the Provider Gateway will be sent along with the welcome and marketing support packs.

#### **STATEMENT OF ACCREDITATION**

Organisations that have been awarded accreditation may use the statement of accreditation and the BAC logo 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'
- 'Accredited by the British Accreditation Council'
- 'Accredited by BAC'
- 'BAC accredited'.

Approved candidates for accreditation must append the words: 'Approved candidate for accreditation' wherever the approval statement appears on their publicity material.

Additional variants of the statement may be used by accredited organisations depending on the scheme for which they have been accredited. Details of the specific statements can be found in the relevant scheme document.

#### **ACCREDITATION MARKS**

Organisations accredited by BAC are encouraged to use the logo on all appropriate documentation and publicity, but please be aware of the following restrictions:

- Official graphics supplied by BAC can only be used. These are available in several variations to meet contextual design considerations — please speak with BAC regarding the different variations.
- The size, positioning, and colouring must adhere to BAC's design specification. Details of this specification and further guidance on using the accreditation mark are available, along with the graphic files, from the BAC office and from the Provider Gateway on the BAC website.
- If the accreditation mark is used on an organisation's website, the HTML code supplied by BAC should be used, allowing web users to click through to the organisation directory on the BAC website.
- All accredited organisations will be notified of any changes to the accreditation mark at least 30 days before they take effect. All instances of the accreditation mark should be replaced in all online and printed promotional materials as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- The BAC logo and accreditation mark must not be used on award, attendance, or completion certificates. Using the BAC mark on a certificate could be considered fraudulent use of the BAC name and can be grounds for withdrawal of accreditation.
- The BAC logo is a registered trademark and must not be duplicated, recreated, or adapted, except as part of the agreed usage of the accreditation mark as described above.

As the 'approved candidate' status is normally awarded only for a limited period of six months, BAC urges caution in referring to this status in any promotional material that may remain in circulation beyond the end of this period; the expense of replacing such material should be considered before printing.

BAC does, however, encourage approved candidate organisations to refer to their status and use the

appropriate mark graphic on their websites and in other time-limited promotional materials.

Full guidance on how to use the candidacy accreditation mark is in the relevant scheme documents. An example of approved statements is:

- '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'.

## **WEBSITE DIRECTORY**

An accredited organisation directory is published on the BAC website and represents the current, definitive list of BAC-accredited organisations. An organisation should familiarise itself with its directory entry, check it on a regular basis, and notify BAC if any obsolete or incorrect information is included.

It is a condition of accreditation that certain basic information on accredited organisations be published in the website directory, details of which can be confirmed with the BAC office. The information to be published will be reviewed periodically and is subject to change but will include the organisation's name, head of organisation, address, contact details, website, and a list of subjects and programmes offered.

Newly accredited organisations are added to the directory once the decision letter, inspection report, and accreditation certificate have been dispatched.

For UK organisations that recruit students through the Short-Term Study Visa system, it is their responsibility to ensure that the name provided to BAC is correct and up-to-date, as the UKVI will check BAC's directory to confirm that any applying student is going to an accredited organisation. If an organisation changes its name without notifying BAC, its students may be refused a visa as the organisation cannot be identified on the directory.

## **7.5 CONDITIONS OF ACCREDITATION**

While it is right to be proud of gaining BAC accreditation, in order to protect the quality of our accreditation, the following conditions apply:

- Accreditation covers all eligible provisions that have been declared and BAC has inspected.
- Accreditation applies to the organisation as a whole and must not be construed as accreditation or validation of individual programmes or awards.
- Accreditation only applies to the specific organisation detailed on the application BAC received and not to any partner, branch, or otherwise connected organisations.
- Inaccurate or misleading statements concerning BAC accreditation must be avoided, and, if uncertain, an organisation should contact BAC to seek clarification on what is acceptable. Any breach of this condition may lead to the withdrawal of accreditation.
- If accreditation is withdrawn, all statements or claims of accreditation by BAC must be removed from all online and printed promotional and other material as soon as is reasonably practicable. A withdrawn organisation must immediately refrain from representing itself as BAC accredited.
- Unaccredited organisations that have applied for accreditation must not make public reference to their application. Any breach of this condition may be taken into account in any subsequent decision on accreditation.

## **7.6 MAINTAINING ACCREDITATION**

Although a major achievement for any organisation, gaining accreditation is not the end of the process. As an accredited organisation, there are continuing responsibilities both to maintain the standards required for BAC accreditation and to cooperate fully with BAC in its monitoring of these

standards. Specific duties arising from these responsibilities are as follows:

- Continue to comply with all relevant laws and regulations
- Continue to maintain all of the minimum standards required for BAC accreditation (as set out in the relevant scheme document)
- Work to meet the requirements set out in previous inspection reports and consider the additional recommendations
- Respond promptly to any and all communication with BAC, including any requests from BAC for information
- Submit to BAC's regular monitoring procedures, including:
  - Notify BAC of any significant changes
  - Interim inspections
  - Spot-check inspections
  - Annual returns
  - Address, to BAC's satisfaction, any concerns raised by government or other bodies with which BAC shares information
  - Cooperate fully and promptly with BAC's complaints procedure
  - Pay the annual accreditation fee and any inspection fees incurred promptly
  - Submit an application for reaccreditation and undergo a full reaccreditation inspection before the expiry date of the current accreditation cycle.

The failure of an organisation to meet any of the above requirements may lead to the withdrawal of accreditation.

BAC encourages all accredited organisations to utilise the tools provided to enhance their quality assurance processes, e.g. incorporating the self-evaluation report into their annual review process.

#### **NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES**

BAC must be immediately notified of any significant changes to an organisation's provision, premises, management, or ownership.

Examples of what constitutes a significant change include:

- Change of the organisation's name
- Change of ownership or company registration
- Change of company directors
- Change of principal, academic manager, or any other person responsible for the organisation's operations
- Relocation to new premises
- Use of additional premises
- Change in the academic programme from that seen in the previous inspection.

It is the organisation's responsibility to inform BAC in good time when such changes occur.

If such a change is planned in advance, BAC should be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable in order to allow a prompt decision to be taken on any course of action. In the case of unplanned changes, BAC should be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable and not later than one week after the change has occurred.

BAC reserves the right to review an organisation's accreditation in light of such changes and to require either the submission of documentary evidence or a supplementary inspection, at the organisation's expense, depending on the nature of the change.

Failure to cooperate with such a requirement from BAC will lead to the withdrawal of accreditation.

Please contact BAC at [info@the-BAC.org](mailto:info@the-BAC.org) to notify us of any changes. BAC will then guide you through any follow-up procedures.

Examples of additional documentary evidence that may be required include:

- A personal reference and CV for any newly appointed principal
- A written statement explaining the reasons behind any change in the organisation's name
- Details of any new programme being introduced, including proof of centre approval by the awarding body where applicable.

### **INTERIM INSPECTIONS**

Where an interim inspection report identifies significant problems or evidence that an organisation is not meeting BAC's minimum standards, the Accreditation Committee may require further action, such as:

- A further full or supplementary inspection at your organisation's expense
- An unannounced spot check at your organisation's expense
- The submission of an action plan for addressing the issues identified
- The setting of a deadline for the submission of documentary evidence demonstrating that the issues identified have been resolved.

Should the interim inspection report show grounds for such action, the Accreditation Committee also reserves the right to:

- Change accreditation to probation accreditation
- Place accreditation into abeyance while a full investigation is undertaken
- Withdraw accreditation.

### **SPOT-CHECK INSPECTIONS**

The spot-check inspection report will be considered by the Accreditation Committee, who will decide either that accreditation should continue or that there are areas of concern that require further action. The organisation will be sent details of any decision and of any further action required.

Where a spot-check inspection report identifies significant problems or evidence that the organisation is not maintaining BAC's minimum standards, the Accreditation Committee may require further action, including:

- A further unannounced inspection at your organisation's expense
- The submission of an action plan for addressing the issues identified.
- The setting of a deadline for the submission of documentary evidence demonstrating that the issues identified have been resolved.

Where a spot-check inspection identifies evidence of a serious breach of the law, a significant risk to the welfare of students, or an attempt to deceive BAC or its inspectors, the Accreditation Committee (or its designated sub-committee) may withdraw an organisation's accreditation with immediate effect.

Full cooperation with any action required by the Accreditation Committee following an interim or a spot-check inspection is a condition of continuing accreditation. In some cases, the Accreditation Committee may decide to place accreditation into abeyance while such action is carried out. Any subsequent failure of an organisation to cooperate fully may lead to the immediate withdrawal of accreditation.

### **ANNUAL RETURN**

All BAC-accredited organisations are required to submit an annual return at the end of each academic year and, in doing so, to alert BAC to any changes that may affect the standards of provision offered

by the organisation. Where significant changes have occurred, a supplementary inspection, at the cost of the organisation, may be required.

### **PAYMENT OF ACCREDITATION FEES**

All accredited organisations are required to pay an annual accreditation fee. The exact fee payable by most organisations depends on either the number of enrolments or the number of course days per year. Please refer to the relevant scheme document or the BAC fees brochure or speak to BAC staff for specific information on how accreditation fees are calculated.

Organisations must therefore supply BAC with accurate enrolment figures once a year upon request. Organisations that are awarded accreditation mid-year will be asked to provide details of student numbers or course days for the last full academic year (1 September–31 August). If such figures are not submitted by the deadline given, organisations may be subject to additional charges.

If the annual accreditation fee has not been paid by the deadline given on the invoice, BAC reserves the right to assume that the organisation has decided to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation. This may result in you no longer being permitted to use the BAC quality mark and BAC accreditation benefits and services.

If an organisation withdraws voluntarily in the first six months of the accreditation year (September–February), it will be liable for payment of half the annual fee if fees have not yet been paid. A refund for the last six months can be applied for.

If an organisation withdraws voluntarily on or after 1 March, it will be liable for full payment of the annual fee. No refund of any part of the annual fees can be applied for.

If an organisation is withdrawn by decision of the Accreditation Committee or by BAC, this is classed as a ‘forced’ withdrawal and is considered a breach of BAC’s terms and conditions. Therefore, an organisation forced to withdrawal forfeits any rights to a refund.

### **7.7 REACCREDITATION PROCESS**

An accreditation cycle is four years.

Six months prior to the end of an accreditation cycle, the Inspections Coordinator will contact the organisation to invite them to apply for reaccreditation.

To remain accredited, an organisation must go through the full reaccreditation process, which is:

- Submission of a complete application and supporting documents
- Completed self-evaluation report
- A full on-site inspection.

The full inspection must be completed prior to the expiry date of the cycle. It is important that the organisation follows all deadlines set for the application submission and inspection dates in order to ensure that the process is completed before the accreditation expires.

Should an organisation fail to undergo a reaccreditation inspection before its current accreditation expiry date, the organisation’s accreditation will be withdrawn. The procedure for application for reaccreditation is set out in Section 5.4 of this handbook.

Accreditation may be extended for a period, normally of no more than one year, if the Accreditation Committee (or its designated sub-committee) considers there to be exceptional circumstances that make it necessary to delay the reaccreditation inspection (any granted extended period will not postpone the date of the subsequent due date for reaccreditation).

These would normally involve significant changes that have recently taken place or are planned.

Requests for an extension of full accreditation must be submitted to the BAC office at least six months before the expiry date of the current accreditation cycle. BAC will then submit the request to the Accreditation Committee at the next meeting following the request to BAC.

## 7.8 WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION

An organisation may voluntarily withdraw from BAC accreditation by submitting one month's notification. For further details, please contact the BAC office, and a withdrawal form will be sent out.

Occasionally, BAC is required to withdraw accreditation from an organisation because it has failed to meet the conditions for maintaining accreditation or because its provision no longer meets BAC's minimum standards.

Withdrawal of accreditation means that the organisation is removed from the directory of accredited organisations and moved to the directory of historically accredited organisations for a period of 24 months. After 24 months, an organisation's name is removed, but members of the public may request, in writing, any inspection reports conducted by BAC in relation to the withdrawn organisation.

For organisations that apply for BAC accreditation and undertake the inspection and subsequent accreditation process and fail to obtain accreditation, their inspection report will be listed under the 'unsuccessful accreditation application' page for a period of two years before being removed.

Any UK-based organisation that recruits under the Short-Term Study Visa will not be eligible to recruit via this route if accreditation has been withdrawn.

There are a number of reasons why accreditation can be suspended or withdrawn:

- Following an inspection: The Accreditation Committee (or its designated sub-committee) may withdraw accreditation if the inspection report shows your organisation as failing to meet the minimum standards required for accreditation as outlined in the appropriate scheme document.
- Following a complaint: The Accreditation Committee (or its designated sub-committee) may withdraw accreditation following a complaint under the procedures set out in Section 10 of this handbook.
- Changes to the organisation mean that the organisation no longer meets the eligibility criteria as stated in Sections 1.2 and 1.3 of this handbook and in the individual scheme documents, e.g. the provider can no longer demonstrate its financial viability.
- Failure to meet the requirements for continuing accreditation: The Accreditation Committee (or its designated sub-committee) may withdraw accreditation if your organisation fails to meet the requirements for continuing accreditation as set out in this handbook.
- The organisation has not recruited or enrolled any active students/learners/participants for 12 months or more.

In addition to the above scenarios, the Accreditation Committee or sub-committee may withdraw the accreditation of your organisation with immediate effect for any serious breach of the regulations in this handbook, including:

- Potential reputational damage to BAC arising from the actions of the organisation, its owners, or senior management.
- Conviction of the owner(s), a company director, or the head of the organisation on either civil or criminal grounds relevant to the good management of the organisation.
- Bankruptcy, where the organisation is owned by individuals, or insolvency, where the organisation

is owned by a company.

- Failure to comply with all relevant laws, policies, acts, and regulations.
- Failure to respond within a reasonable time to a request from BAC in respect to a complaint from a student or external body.
- Non-payment of accreditation, inspection, or other fees.
- Failure to undergo a reaccreditation inspection by the accreditation expiry date.
- Failure to submit to a spot-check, supplementary, or early reaccreditation inspection required by BAC.
- The making of any false or intentionally misleading statements on the forms or in associated documents of the application, annual return, or any other submission to BAC.
- The making of any false or intentionally misleading statements or claims in respect to the nature or scope of your accreditation by BAC.
- Changes within your organisation that render it no longer eligible for BAC accreditation.

The above lists are not exhaustive.

A breach of BAC's regulations such as those listed above will usually lead to a thorough investigation conducted by BAC.

Once BAC has conducted the investigation, a report will be submitted to the Accreditation Committee, who will consider whether accreditation should remain in place, be changed to probation accreditation, or be withdrawn.

### **APPEALING AGAINST THE WITHDRAWAL OF ACCREDITATION**

If accreditation is withdrawn from an accredited organisation, then the organisation may appeal against the decision under the procedures set out in Section 9 of this handbook.

### **VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL FROM ACCREDITATION**

An organisation can choose to withdraw from accreditation at any point in its accreditation cycle.

An organisation that wishes to withdraw must follow the full withdrawal process:

- Notify BAC by email ([info@the-bac.org](mailto:info@the-bac.org)) or by telephone (0300 330 1400).
- BAC will send a withdrawal form and request the form to be completed by a set date.
  - The form must be signed by the head of the organisation.
  - One month's notice is required.
- Once the withdrawal form has been submitted to BAC, the leaving date will be confirmed by email.
- All mention of the BAC name and logo must be removed from all printed and online material within ten days of the withdrawal date.

BAC may contact the withdrawing organisation to discuss the reasons for withdrawal, as BAC values all feedback on how it can improve its service to accredited organisations.

If an organisation withdraws from accreditation, it will remain liable for any outstanding fees owed to BAC, including the annual accreditation fee.

## **7.9 PUBLISHING INSPECTION REPORTS**

In order to ensure transparency and public accountability and public benefit, BAC reserves the right to publish all inspection reports on its website.

Accredited organisations are permitted to post BAC reports in full on their own websites. Extracts from reports may be used as long as they are a true reflection of the overall outcome of the report and cannot be considered misleading.

## 8. PROGRAMMES AND AWARDS

### 8.1 DEGREES

If an organisation is offering an award that is described as a 'degree', it must have had degree-awarding powers officially bestowed upon it by the relevant regional or national educational agency or have a valid validation or franchise agreement with a recognised degree-awarding organisation or body.

Recognised degree-awarding organisations or bodies must be recognised by either UK NARIC ([www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk)) or the US Department of Education ([www.ed.gov/accreditation](http://www.ed.gov/accreditation)).

No BAC-accredited organisation should advertise pathway courses that lead to a degree as a degree-awarding course.

If an organisation is considering entering into a partnership enabling the offer of degree programmes, it is strongly recommended that BAC is contacted to ensure that the awarding body meets BAC's requirements.

UK organisations offering courses leading to degrees awarded by an overseas body must state the location of the degree awarding body so that it is clear to all stakeholders that the qualification is not a UK degree.

### 8.2 INTERNAL AWARDS

BAC inspectors will consider the accuracy of any claims made by organisations as to the level and status of their internal awards, the extent to which they are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study, and whether external moderators are involved in the assessment procedures.

## 9. APPEALS

Accreditation by BAC is a voluntary arrangement between your organisation and BAC. However, if the Accreditation Committee refuses or withdraws accreditation, the organisation may appeal against the decision under the following procedure. The decision to refuse or withdraw accreditation will have been confirmed in a letter to the organisation, accompanied by the reasons why this decision was made.

The right of appeal is granted solely to provide an organisation with the means of challenging either the assessment made by the inspectors in the course of an inspection or the judgement of the Accreditation Committee in coming to its decision.

An organisation has no right within this appeals procedure to challenge either the criteria used for assessment and standards required for accreditation or the general regulations that accredited organisations must follow (as set out in this handbook and any addenda).

An organisation has the right to challenge the application of these criteria, standards, and regulations in its individual case.

For complaints about the criteria, standards, and regulations of BAC's accreditation scheme, see Section 10.3 of this handbook.

### **9.1 LODGING AN APPEAL**

If an organisation wishes to appeal a decision, a written notice of intent must be sent to BAC by email or letter within ten working days of the date on the withdrawal notification letter.

For this purpose, each working day is held to end at 16.00.

Any letter confirming the refusal or withdrawal of accreditation will be delivered to the organisation's designated primary contact both by email and by post. You must ensure that any correspondence addressed to your primary contact is opened and dealt with in the person's absence.

The notice of appeal must be accompanied by full payment of the appeal fee (please see the BAC fees brochure). This fee will be refunded if the appeal is upheld.

### **9.2 GROUNDS FOR APPEAL**

The appeal submission must clearly state the grounds for the appeal, selecting one of the following arguments:

- The decision was not made in accordance with the procedures or criteria set out in the Accreditation Handbook.
- If the grounds for appeal do not fall under the above, an explanation must be provided.

BAC retains the right to accept or refuse the explanation if there is no supporting evidence.

### **9.3 APPEAL SUBMISSION**

Within ten working days of the date noted on the notification letter, your organisation must submit a statement setting out the grounds for appeal, selecting one of the arguments described above, together with any relevant supporting documentation.

### **9.4 APPEAL PROCESS**

An appeal will be heard by the Standing Committee, who will consider documentation comprising the following (where relevant):

- The most recent application form and supporting documentation submitted by the organisation
- The relevant inspection report(s)
- Written submissions from the inspectors who carried out the relevant inspection(s)
- Any other material agreed by both BAC and the appellant to be relevant.

All parties to the appeal will receive the same documentary evidence.

The appeal hearing will normally take place within 30 working days of the submission of the appeal and any supporting evidence.

Once convened, the Standing Committee will make a decision within 15 working days.

The Standing Committee may ask for additional information to be submitted. If additional information is requested, a deadline is set for when the new information is to be submitted. If additional information is requested, the Committee's decision will be made within 15 working days of being reconvened to review the new evidence.

### **9.5 DECISIONS ON APPEALS**

At the end of the hearing, the Appeal Committee makes one of three decisions:

- To dismiss the appeal
- To order a new inspection at BAC's expense

→ To instruct the Accreditation Committee to award or reinstate accreditation.

The outcome of the appeal will be final, and there will be no further recourse to the appeals process.

## 9.6 ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES FOR APPEALS

**No appeal will be heard while your organisation owes BAC any accreditation, inspection, or other fees. If your organisation fails to settle all outstanding debts within ten working days of its notice of appeal, its right to appeal will expire.**

In the period between the notice of appeal and the outcome of the appeal, an accredited organisation remains accredited and an unaccredited organisation remains unaccredited.

Only material that was in existence at the time of the inspection or of the report's consideration by the Accreditation Committee can be considered at an appeal.

If the appeal is dismissed, the original decision of the Accreditation Committee will stand. A new, full application will need to be submitted if the organisation wishes to reapply for BAC accreditation after a minimum period of 24 months, but this will not be considered until BAC is first satisfied that all the action points set out in the refusal/withdrawal letter have been, or shortly will be, met.

After the appeal hearing:

- The appealing organisation will be informed of the Standing Committee's decision within ten working days of the decision being made.
- The outcome of the appeal will also be reported to the next meeting of the Accreditation Committee.

# 10. COMPLAINTS

**All accredited organisations must have an explicit and fair complaints procedure in place to which students, their parents/guardians, or other stakeholders have access, and this procedure should be exhausted before a complaint is referred to BAC.**

**Please note that students at higher education providers in the UK are required to submit their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.**

## 10.1 COMPLAINTS BY STUDENTS AGAINST AN ACCREDITED ORGANISATION

*If a student or the student's representative has completed the organisation's own complaints procedure but has still not achieved a satisfactory resolution, the following should be submitted to BAC:*

- A detailed letter of complaint, including a full description of the cause for complaint and the circumstances in which it arose.
- A written statement either by letter or email from the complainant authorising BAC to investigate the complaint and to raise the matter with the organisation on the complainant's behalf.
- Copies of all supporting documentation relating to the complaint. BAC staff will seek to resolve all complaints received against accredited organisations to the mutual satisfaction of the complainant and the organisation, with the exception of complaints that appear to relate to offences more appropriately referred to a statutory authority.

### WHAT BAC CAN DO

**When BAC receives a complaint from a student or his/her representative against an accredited**

**organisation, the following procedure applies:**

- BAC requests evidence to support the complaint; and
- BAC requests evidence to show that the complainant has exhausted the organisation's complaints procedure.

**Only if the above evidence is received will the procedure below be followed:**

- The details of the complaint will be recorded by BAC staff.
- BAC will collate the relevant documentation.
- The organisation concerned will be informed of the nature of the complaint and asked to investigate its cause.
- The organisation will be required to submit a written response within ten working days, detailing the outcome of its investigation and, where appropriate, proposing a course of action to resolve the matter.
- BAC will inform the complainant of the outcome of the organisation's investigation and any proposed course of action.
- BAC will, with the agreement of both the complainant and the organisation, make reasonable attempts to mediate between the two parties in order to resolve the matter.
- BAC may make recommendations for resolving the matter, but these will not be binding on either party.

If the matter remains unresolved after BAC's attempts, a report on the complaint will be made to the Accreditation Committee.

A report will also be made to the Accreditation Committee if more than three complaints against any one organisation are received in any one year.

If a complaint is received against an organisation that BAC does not accredit, BAC will ascertain whether or not the organisation is accredited by another recognised accrediting body. If it is, BAC will redirect the complainant to that other body. Any new or outstanding complaint against an organisation whose accreditation has been withdrawn by BAC, or that withdrew voluntarily from accreditation, may be similarly redirected should the organisation later be awarded accreditation by another recognised accrediting body.

**THE ROLE OF THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE**

**If the Accreditation Committee (or a delegated sub-committee of its members) receives a report on a complaint against an accredited organisation, it will assess whether or not there is evidence that the standards required for accreditation are not being met, and it may make one of the following decisions:**

- To dismiss the complaint.
- To require further investigation of the complaint by BAC, which may include an unannounced spot check at the organisation's expense.
- To require the organisation to undertake remedial or compensatory action where it is considered to have failed to meet its responsibilities or uphold the standards of accreditation; if the organisation refuses to undertake such action, its accreditation may be suspended or withdrawn.
- To require an immediate spot check, supplementary inspection, or full inspection at the organisation's expense where there is evidence that the minimum standards required for accreditation are not being met; if the organisation refuses to submit to the inspection, its accreditation may be withdrawn.
- To withdraw accreditation; this decision is normally made only where the report of the complaint indicates that the organisation has refused to cooperate with BAC's investigation; that it has refused to take any required remedial or compensatory action; or that there is convincing evidence of illegal behaviour by its senior management or any other serious breach of BAC's regulations.

BAC will notify the complainant and the organisation in writing of the Accreditation Committee's decision.

### **WHAT BAC CANNOT DO**

**BAC cannot consider complaints under the following circumstances:**

- Where the complainant has failed, without good reason, to make use of the organisation's own complaints procedure.
- Where the complainant fails to provide evidence to support the complaint.
- Where the organisation is not currently accredited by BAC.
- Where the substance of the complaint is not relevant to BAC's regulations or accreditation standards.
- Where the complaint is made anonymously or solely by telephone; complaints must be made in writing and accompanied by the complainant's name and address.
- Where the complaint relates to a refund claim but is not accompanied by legible proof of payment in the form of a receipt; copies of bank statements are not sufficient.
- Where the complaint is already subject to a legal process or the complainant has engaged a solicitor in relation to the complaint.
- Where the complaint relates to a contractual dispute between the organisation and an employee or employees.
- Where the complainant before enrolment has failed, without good reason, to establish that the content of a course is of value to him or her and that the awarding body is appropriately recognised.

BAC cannot enforce an accredited organisation to make any financial recompense to a complainant, even if BAC upholds a complaint against an organisation.

### **10.2 OTHER COMPLAINTS AGAINST AN ORGANISATION**

BAC will carry out an investigation where a statutory body shares evidence or intelligence that a BAC-accredited organisation is breaching legal requirements. Under these circumstances, the statutory body will be informed of the outcome of BAC's investigation of the complaint.

No formal complaints procedure is available to any other complainant, but BAC may choose to carry out its own investigation of accredited organisations if it receives any evidence or intelligence of a failure to meet the standards required for accreditation or of a breach of other BAC regulations.

### **10.3 COMPLAINTS AGAINST BAC**

**BAC is committed to working in an open, transparent, and accountable way, which includes responding positively to complaints from organisations by investigating them thoroughly and, where appropriate and possible, correcting any mistakes identified.**

### **COMPLAINTS ABOUT INSPECTIONS OR INSPECTORS**

An inspection evaluation questionnaire is emailed to the organisation when inspections are arranged. Please use this to submit any feedback (positive or negative) you may have about the inspectors or the conduct of the inspection.

If an organisation wishes to raise a complaint regarding an inspection or an inspector, this should be detailed in the feedback form and submitted to BAC within ten working days of the end of the inspection.

The complaint will be reviewed by the Chief Inspector, who may contact the complaining organisation if further information is required.

The Chief Inspector will contact the lead inspector for their feedback. The inspector will have ten working days to respond.

The Chief Inspector will make a decision on the complaint and any follow-up action, if necessary, within ten working days of receiving the lead inspector's feedback.

The complaining organisation will be notified of the Chief Inspector's decision and any follow-up action within ten working days of the Chief Inspector's decision.

### **COMPLAINTS ABOUT BAC STAFF**

The roles and responsibilities of BAC staff are fully addressed in their training programmes. Staff are made aware of what is expected of them, both in the content of their work and in the way they carry it out. BAC takes seriously its duty to prepare inspectors and staff to do their work effectively, professionally, and with due courtesy and regard to the organisation and its staff. In turn, BAC expects organisations to treat inspectors and staff with the respect, courtesy, and professionalism necessary for a successful inspection.

However, BAC recognises that there may be occasions when organisations wish to complain about the conduct, behaviour, and actions of BAC, its staff, or its agents in relation to the published purposes, procedures, criteria, methods, and protocols associated with its accreditation schemes. Complaints such as these should be sent to the Chief Executive.

A member of BAC staff may contact the organisation to investigate any negative feedback.

### **COMPLAINTS ABOUT BAC ACCREDITATION SCHEMES**

These will be considered by the Accreditation Committee. Complaints such as these should be submitted in writing to the Chair. Complainants will be informed of the Council's response to their complaint by its Chair within ten working days of the meeting.

## **11. USEFUL INFORMATION**

### **11.1 BAC WEBSITE**

**While this handbook is intended to provide a comprehensive guide to the standards, procedures, and regulations of BAC's accreditation schemes, the BAC website contains additional information on many aspects of BAC's work, as well as providing a useful repository of all the documents and forms required by applicant and accredited organisations.**

<http://www.the-bac.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/BAC-Terms-and-Conditions.pdf>  
BAC's terms and conditions.

[www.the-bac.org/about/](http://www.the-bac.org/about/)

All about BAC, its governance, history, and mission.

[www.the-bac.org/accreditation/](http://www.the-bac.org/accreditation/)

General information about BAC's accreditation schemes and a repository of accreditation-related documents and forms.

[www.the-bac.org/colleges/](http://www.the-bac.org/colleges/)

Information on all BAC-accredited organisations, including the comprehensive directory of accredited organisations.

[www.the-bac.org/provider-gateway/](http://www.the-bac.org/provider-gateway/)

The Provider Gateway, a password-protected area for accredited organisations only, featuring an archive of email bulletins, webinars, and materials and a repository of relevant downloads and documents. There is also information about scheme logos and other information relevant to accredited organisations.

### 11.2 CONTACTING BAC

**Please contact the BAC office in order to discuss specific issues related to your accreditation or to receive general pre-application advice:**

Telephone: 0300 330 1400

[info@the-bac.org](mailto:info@the-bac.org)

The BAC office is open from Monday to Friday 8.30–17.00, except on public holidays and during the period between Christmas and New Year. Guidelines on what kind of enquiries can be answered and at what times can be found on the BAC website at [www.the-bac.org/contact](http://www.the-bac.org/contact).

### 11.3 USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

**The following organisations can provide information and advice on statutory requirements and good practice relevant to the operations of an independent education organisation in the UK and overseas.**

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) provides information on conflict resolution in the workplace.

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-business-energy-and-industrial-strategy)

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy is the government department responsible for supporting sustained growth and higher skills across the economy, especially through further and higher education and skills training.

[www.gov.uk/guidance/recognised-uk-degrees](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/recognised-uk-degrees)

You will find information relating to the award of UK degrees here.

[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

The British Council works with government policy-makers, higher education agencies, university leaders, academics, and students worldwide to support international higher education. It offers face-to-face English language courses in 80 teaching centres around the world and administers more than two million exams, including the IELTS test, in more than 100 countries every year. It accredits 500 teaching centres in the UK.

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission;](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission)

[www.oscr.org.uk;](http://www.oscr.org.uk)

[www.charitycommissionni.org.uk](http://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk)

Contact the above for information about charity registration and regulation in England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

[www.cla.co.uk](http://www.cla.co.uk)

The Copyright Licensing Agency tells you all you need to know about registration and restrictions on photocopying and other copyright information.

[www.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk)

Companies House provides information about companies registered in the UK.

[www.cvu.ac.uk](http://www.cvu.ac.uk)

The Council of Validating Universities promotes good practice in collaborative provision between UK universities and their partners.

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Direct Gov provides general advice on UK laws and regulations.

[www.enqa.eu](http://www.enqa.eu)

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) disseminates information, experience, and good practice in the field of quality assurance in higher education to European quality assurance agencies, public authorities, and higher education organisations.

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

The Equality and Human Rights Commission provides advice and guidance on equal rights issues.

[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

The Health and Safety Executive offers guidance and advice on health and safety. Further information can be found with the Fire Protection Association [www.thefpa.co.uk](http://www.thefpa.co.uk), the Planning Portal [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk), and the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk).

[www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

Registration with the Information Commissioner's Office is required for any organisation holding electronic data on its students or employees. There is also further information on data protection available.

[set.et-foundation.co.uk/](http://set.et-foundation.co.uk/)

The Society for Education and Training is the independent professional body for teachers and trainers in further education and skills. Their role is to support professional development in order to deliver the best possible teaching experience to learners. Its members gain access to a telephone helpline, regional advisers, CPD advice, and events.

[www.inqaahe.org](http://www.inqaahe.org)

The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) is a worldwide association of over 200 organisations active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education.

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)

Contact the Disclosure and Barring Service for details of registration, requirements, and legislation regarding safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in England. Disclosure Scotland [www.mygov.scot/organisations/disclosure-scotland](http://www.mygov.scot/organisations/disclosure-scotland) provides similar information and advice in Scotland.

[www.londoninternational.ac.uk](http://www.londoninternational.ac.uk)

Through the University of London International Programmes — formerly the University of London External System — the University of London has made its degree programmes accessible to students all over the world since 1858. It has over 50,000 students in every corner of the globe studying on more than 100 programmes.

[www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk)

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) is responsible for maintaining standards, improving confidence, and distributing information about qualifications and examinations. It regulates general and vocational qualifications in England and vocational

qualifications in Northern Ireland. It gives formal recognition to bodies and organisations that deliver qualifications and assessments. It also accredits their awards and monitors their activities.

**[www.open.ac.uk](http://www.open.ac.uk)**

Through its partnerships with a range of student organisations worldwide, the Open University (OU) validates awards that have parity of esteem with awards offered throughout UK higher education.

**[www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)**

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is the educational oversight body and quality assurance agency for higher education in the UK. QAA exists to assure standards and improve the quality of UK higher education.

**[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)**

The Scottish Qualifications Authority is the Scottish equivalent of Ofqual and is also an awarding body in its own right.

**[www.independenthe.com](http://www.independenthe.com)**

Independent HE is the membership association for HE independent colleges.

**[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration)**

UK Visas and Immigration is the government arm dealing with immigration. On their website, there is information regarding Tier 4 sponsorship, student visitor visas, and legislation and regulation on the migration of students and workers.

**[www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk)**

The UK Council for International Student Affairs is an invaluable source of advice and guidance for students coming to study in the UK. Other useful contacts include the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner **[www.oisc.gov.uk](http://www.oisc.gov.uk)** and the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association **[www.ilpa.org.uk](http://www.ilpa.org.uk)**.

**[www.uknarc.org.uk](http://www.uknarc.org.uk)**

UK NARIC is the national agency responsible for providing information, advice, and expert opinion on vocational, academic, and professional skills and qualifications from over 180 countries worldwide.

**[www.universitiesuk.ac.uk](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk)**

Universities UK (UUK) is the representative organisation for UK universities. Together with Higher Education Wales and Universities Scotland, its mission is to be the definitive voice for all universities in the UK, providing high-quality leadership and support to its members to promote a successful and diverse higher education sector.



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**Telephone:** 0300 330 1400

**Email:** [info@the-bac.org](mailto:info@the-bac.org)

**Website:** [www.the-bac.org](http://www.the-bac.org)

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