



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Worldstrides/CBL International

ADDRESS: 3rd Quad
Oriel College
Oriel Square
Oxford
OX1 4EW

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Ms Amanda Stuart

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 11 September 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: 28 November 2019

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Worldstrides/CBL International (CBL/the Provider) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Worldstrides, a company based in Charlottesville, Virginia, United States of America (USA). The Provider was first established as Oxford King's College in 2012. Teaching began in March 2013 and the name of the company was changed to CBL International Oxbridge Programmes in August 2015, trading as Worldstrides/CBL International. In early 2018, the CBL International Oxbridge Programmes company was dissolved and the Worldstrides/CBL International brand became part of Casterbridge Tours Limited which is the United Kingdom (UK) arm of Worldstrides. The Provider currently operates in the UK as a division of Casterbridge Tours Limited.

The Provider is headed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who is also the President and acts as Programme Director. He is supported by the Lead Manager Academic Programmes. CBL employs eight other full-time staff, plus part-time seasonal employees as tutors and deans during periods when programmes are being delivered. In addition, it can call on the resources and professional expertise of colleagues in the wider Worldstrides group in relation to activities such as marketing and compliance. The CEO reports to the Worldstrides board on financial matters but retains direct responsibility for decisions in relation to the content and delivery of CBL's programmes.

CBL provides short academic courses for high school, college and university students and adults in Oxford and Cambridge during the Easter and summer vacations. Academic study is complemented by a programme of excursions and activities, which enables the participants to engage with British life and culture. Its aim is to provide a distinctive residential study experience in Oxford and Cambridge to a cosmopolitan participant body from schools, colleges and universities around the world.

The courses are run in Oriel College, Oxford and Magdalene College, Cambridge. Additional teaching and residential accommodation are used in colleges in Oxford, as well as other locations, as required.

CBL's main office is now within the larger office of Casterbridge Tours Limited in London and it retains a small office at Oriel College, Oxford, which is mainly used during peak periods of programme planning and during delivery. The registered office of the company is in London.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Subjects offered in Oxford include International and English Law, International Economics, English Literature, Politics, Philosophy and Economics, Science, Technology, Earth Sciences and Mathematics, and Learning Skills. Subjects offered in Cambridge include International Business and Management, International Relations and Politics, History, Engineering, and Natural Science specialising in Biochemistry.

For high school level students, the majority of whom are under 18, CBL offers two-week subject-specific residential programmes taught by experienced academics from Oxford or Cambridge under the brands of Summer in Oxford and the Cambridge Summer Academy. Subjects offered in Oxford include Economics, Law, Natural Sciences, and Politics, Philosophy and Economics. Subjects offered in Cambridge include Business and Management: International Relations and Organisations, Medicine, and History.

At the time of the inspection, the final CBL Summer Institute of 2019 was operating, with 11 adult participants of undergraduate level or above from Italy, Belgium, Portugal, Switzerland, India and China. All participants were following a course in law, delivered through face-to-face teaching by tutors from Oxford, supported by pre-readings distributed by the Provider. This is one of a number of subject-specific one-week programmes offered to university students, to support their studies at their home institutions under the brands of Oxford Summer Abroad and Cambridge Summer Institute. Participants may enrol for a single week, or for two or more programmes over a series of weeks. The maximum number of participants for each course is 16.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out at Oriel College, Oxford by a single inspector over a day. Meetings were held with the Programme Director and Lead Manager Academic Programmes. An inspection of records was conducted and documentation in relation to policies and procedures were examined. The inspector also undertook a short tour of the teaching and residential accommodation used as well as other facilities available to the participants. The inspector observed a teaching session. The Provider and Oriel College both collaborated fully with the inspection process during planning for, and on the day of the inspection itself.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	21 & 27-28 August 2013
Interim	27 August 2014
Re-accreditation	2-3 August 2017
Supplementary	21-23 August 2018

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the institution.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

CBL Oxbridge International Programmes was dissolved in February 2018 and the Worldstrides/CBL International brand now operates through Casterbridge Tours Limited, a wholly owned UK subsidiary of the USA company Worldstrides. The Provider moved its main office to the London offices of Casterbridge Tours, where it draws on marketing, sales and compliance expertise of the larger company while retaining control of the content and delivery of its programmes.

2. Response to actions points in last report

The Provider must contact referees directly when seeking references for potential staff members. The Provider must ensure that referees are asked to evaluate potential staff members' suitability to work with children.

The Provider contacts referees directly for all potential members of permanent staff. For temporary staff, such as current students working as deans, there may not be time between recruitment and course delivery to do this. However, all are checked against the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) records, or an equivalent national system. Deans are trained and supervised by permanent staff or experienced temporary staff for whom full references have been obtained. All teaching staff are employees of either Oxford or Cambridge, or a college of one of the two universities and references are therefore not sought for these staff. Teaching observations are, however, conducted for all tutors new to CBL's programmes.

The Safeguarding Children Policy must be reviewed in detail to make it clear what people engaged to work on programmes are expected to do in safeguarding situations and separate this guidance from other administrative and managerial requirements.

This action point is now covered clearly in a separate document that is given to all staff with their induction and briefing materials. It was prepared with the support and advice of colleagues within CBL's parent company with significant relevant experience.

The arrangements for staff for whom recruitments checks have not been completed by the time they start working with children must be set out clearly.

Members of CBL's permanent staff are expected to monitor and supervise any temporary non-teaching staff for whom full recruitment checks have not been completed. This is not a written policy and relies on the availability of supervisory staff. It does not therefore guarantee that those who work with children will always be accompanied, until full checks have been completed.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider is recommended to clarify, precisely, who should submit reports on conduct to the DBS.

Any reports on conduct required to be submitted to the DBS will be sent by the Safeguarding Lead. This responsibility is held by the Lead Manager Academic Programmes, who is appropriately trained and serves as nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This is made clear in the Provider's child protection and safety guideline document.

Arrangements for the administration of medication and medical treatment, to those under the age of 18, should be made clear in the Safeguarding Children Policy with regard to medicines being given only with parental consent or medicines being given under medical direction in an emergency, with subsequent notification to parents.

The Provider now has a clear policy on the administration of medication and medical treatment and asks participants for information on their circumstances as part of the Detailed Information Form (DIF) that is issued prior to their arrival in the UK. This includes the opportunity for parents or carers to give consent for specific treatments, based on the participant's medical history. All deans are briefed on any specific medical concerns, such as allergies, confidentially at the start of each programme.

It is strongly recommended that consideration be given to establishing an appeals procedure, which is appropriate for university level courses.

An appropriate appeals procedure is now included in the participants' handbook.

It is recommended to revise the complaints policy to produce a separate complaints procedure specifically pitched at participants that sets out clearly the steps they should take in the event of a complaint.

This is now included in the participants' handbook. However, BAC's procedure is not fully covered in the handbook.

The Provider should name the individual who is acting as DSL in any document given to staff, so that they are clear as to whom they should report concerns.

This is specified clearly by the Lead Manager Academic Programmes in the information sheets given to tutors at the start of a course and in the students' handbook.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Senior managers have a clear vision for the programmes that are offered and how these might be developed. They draw on expertise from their parent company as appropriate, enabling them to identify and implement improvements in processes and procedures cost-effectively.

Information on the participant handbook is clear and generally comprehensive, although there are a number of typographical errors and omissions.

Each September, the permanent staff at CBL review course and participant data including feedback from participants, tutors and home institutions. The staff also prepare an operational change plan identifying actions and timescales for developments to provision.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Teaching staff are experienced Oxford or Cambridge academics, consistent with the Provider's objective of giving participants a distinctive educational experience. They work with syllabi drawn up by the Provider that are consistent with academic handbooks supplied to home institutions. Sessions are structured to encourage critical analysis and active participation, drawing on the prior studies and wider experiences of the participants.

The majority of participants are seeking to obtain academic credits that will be recognised by their home institutions. The Provider is working to address the few inconsistencies in standards of assessment that it has identified in its analysis of results.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider has developed a mobile application, with information for participants and for staff. This includes schedules, plans and information about extra-curricular activities. It also enables users to send group or individual messages. This is an effective means of timely communication of key information, through a medium with which participants can be expected to be familiar. Staff reports that its introduction helps to reduce participants' queries and simplifies communication with and between participants.

Teaching and residential accommodation is of a high standard and well-managed.

The Provider aims to ensure groups of participants represent a diverse range of nationalities and provides appropriate support and information for individuals from different backgrounds throughout the application process, prior to their arrival in the UK and during their programmes of study.

The complaints policy is now included in the participants' handbook. However, the BAC complaints procedure is not mentioned in all relevant places.

Pressures of time mean that some temporary staff are employed to work with participants, including those under the age of 18, with DBS checks but no independent references. This is not consistent with good practice in safeguarding.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

CBL has good working relationships with the colleges in which it runs its courses. It uses well-equipped and well-maintained teaching rooms and study bedrooms in a collegiate environment.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The Provider is taking advantage of the opportunities provided by its role within a larger and well-established organisation, drawing on expertise and resources there to improve its own programme planning and delivery.

The Provider has built strong links with the colleges in which it delivers its programmes and provides appropriate and well-managed facilities for participants and staff.

The Provider has recently produced comprehensive academic handbooks for each of its programmes, which give detailed information on content, facilitating the award of appropriate credits for participants from their home institutions.

The newly developed mobile application ensures timely communication of key information to participants and staff.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

The Provider must ensure that independent references are obtained for all staff, before they work with under 18s.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
The Provider must conduct a comprehensive updating and proofreading of its print and online materials to ensure accuracy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
The Provider must update its published materials to include reference to BAC complaints procedure in all relevant places.	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (to be reviewed at the next inspection)

The Provider should explore appropriate ways to brief teaching staff on the particular requirements of its programmes, to ensure standards of assessment are consistent across courses.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE