



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM VISIT AND SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION CHANGE OF MANAGEMENT/STAFFING (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: The Granta Academy

ADDRESS: Croft Chambers
11 Bancroft
Bancroft
Hitchin
SG5 1LQ

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Martin Browne

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 29 July 2020

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 1 October 2020

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

The Granta Academy (TGA/the Provider) is a private limited company. It provides short, non-accredited online study skills courses, and a face-to-face summer school. Participants are recruited from outside the United Kingdom (UK) and are considering applying to university in the UK, in particular to Oxford or Cambridge. TGA was established in 2017.

The Provider is located in the City of Cambridge and currently operates, for administrative purposes, from private residential accommodation belonging to TGA's sole proprietor. Participants attending the summer school study and live in one of the colleges of the University of Cambridge (UoC).

TGA aims to provide participants with an experience of study and life as an undergraduate in a UoC college and to help them to apply to the university in the future.

The sole proprietor, who is also the Managing Director, is supported by the Director of Studies. The Director of Studies is also responsible for pastoral care and administration.

The Provider has been restructured to reflect the current programme of a small number of non-accredited online study skills courses that are designed to prepare participants for the summer school.

2. Brief description of the current provision

TGA's face-to-face programme is a two-week summer school, delivered once a year in July. Participants select one of six core academic courses in Computer Science, Economics, Engineering, English Literature, Law and Natural Sciences, which they study in small seminar groups.

The Provider also runs supplementary workshops designed to provide participants with key study skills and an introduction to the UK university system. The workshops also provide practical guidance for taking the next steps towards university application.

The Provider also offers additional online study skills courses, which include a taster of the core academic courses as a precursor to the face-to-face provision. These courses are delivered between September and May. Participants can attend the summer school without studying the online courses.

The face-to-face courses include 16 seminars as well as two one-to-one tutorials. Remote learning sessions consist of one-to-one tutorials lasting for approximately one hour. Participants have an allocation of 30 hours' online learning. Participants access these hours based on a flexible timetable.

There were four participants studying on one online study skills course at the time of the inspection. All were aged under 18. All participants were female and were from the United States of America. Sixteen participants attended the face-to-face summer school in 2019.

Summer school participants are enrolled a month prior to the start of the programme to allow for preparatory reading. Online participants are enrolled between September and May.

There are clear entry requirements. Participants complete an application form and undergo an online interview prior to acceptance on the courses. English language proficiency at the appropriate level is verified. Entry requirements apply to summer school and online learning participants.

3. Inspection process

The online inspection was conducted in one day. Online meetings were held with senior and operational managers and trainers. A wide range of documentation was available for scrutiny, including feedback from previous participants. Photographs of the premises were reviewed. The Provider engaged very positively with the inspection and made additional evidence available when requested in a timely way.

4. Background to the supplementary inspection

The supplementary inspection was arranged due to the appointment of a new Director of Studies, since the last inspection. In addition, there were previously two proprietors. Currently there is a sole proprietor, who was one of the previous two owners. He continues in the role of Managing Director.

5. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Stage 2	5 February 2018
Stage 3	11-12 July 2019

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements 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

Currently there is a sole proprietor, who was one of the previous two owners. He continues in the role of Managing Director.

A new member of staff has recently become Director of Studies. The duties of this role include the operational management of the academic studies, pastoral care, safeguarding and administration.

The Provider usually delivers one summer school in July. The summer school was not delivered this academic year. However, a small number of online study skills courses are being offered, which include a taster of some curriculum areas offered during the summer school. The previous structure included a manager for social activities and a manager for pastoral care and safeguarding who supported face-to-face delivery of the summer school and participants in residential accommodation. The safeguarding and pastoral care roles have now been assimilated with the Director of Studies role. Management roles will be reviewed prior to delivery of the summer school. This will be to support face-to-face delivery and participants in residential accommodation when additional management support may be needed. Accommodation changes for participants are in place for the delivery of the summer school.

2. Response to actions points in last report

6.2 The Provider must record any participant absences formally.

A formal attendance register for face-to-face participants is used in the morning, afternoon and evening. This is recorded on paper-based registers. Attendance at the online courses is formally recorded electronically. Attendance recording includes a record of absences.

7.4 A mechanism for providing information about the Provider's response to participant feedback for the benefit of current and prospective participants must be implemented.

An evaluation of all the participants' feedback from the last summer school has been carried out. The mechanism used to communicate the outcomes of feedback evaluation is a group e-mail after the completion of the course.

8.2 8.3 The Provider must record its evaluation of participant feedback and resulting action plans.

There is a record of the evaluation carried out of participants' feedback and resulting action plans have been developed. Clear and focused action points are included in the action plans. This process has resulted in appropriate changes and improvements to the quality of the provision.

9.2 The Provider must ensure that appropriate private spaces are used for all teaching sessions and tutorials to support effective learning.

The Provider has identified appropriate alternative teaching spaces for future face-to-face teaching. These spaces are appropriate for all teaching sessions and tutorials and support effective learning.

20.5 The Provider must ensure that participants aged under 18 are accommodated in separate areas from older participants to promote safety.

The Provider has identified specific accommodation arrangements that will ensure that participants aged under 18 will be accommodated in separate areas.

24.8 The Provider must ensure that rooms are appropriately ventilated, should the programmes run during hot weather.

The Provider has identified accommodation changes that will ensure that the rooms used for teaching and tutorials are appropriately ventilated.

25.1 The Provider must ensure that suitable teaching spaces are available for all sessions.

The Provider has identified appropriate teaching spaces that will be available for all teaching and tutorial sessions.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

There were no recommendations identified in the previous report.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (supplementary inspection)

The numbers below refer to the standards as presented in the short course provider scheme document and main full inspection report.

1. The provider is effectively managed

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 1.1 | The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, trustees or governing body. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.2 | The head of the provider and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 1.3 | There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff and those working at the delivery venue/s. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Managing Director and Director of Studies are well qualified and very experienced. They are clear about their roles and responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out.

The Director of Studies demonstrates a clear commitment to the delivery of good-quality academic content at an appropriate level for individual participants.

Communication is effectively carried out by means of electronic communication methods and regular staff meetings. Consequently, the trainers are well informed and understand what is expected of them in the delivery of the courses.

2. The administration of the provider is effective

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 2.1 | Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.2 | The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the provider. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.3 | The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2.4 | Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the provider. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

2.5 Data collection and collation systems are effective. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The administrator is appropriately qualified and experienced.

The administrative support provided to managers is clearly defined and understood. As a result, managers have access to efficient and timely support as required.

Clear and well-developed policies and procedures are available online and in the staff handbook.

Data collection and collation systems are effective. Participants' administration records are appropriately maintained centrally in a suitable electronic format.

3. The provider employs appropriate managerial and administrative staff

3.1 There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff. Yes No

3.2 Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment. Yes No

3.3 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Managers make use of robust recruitment and selection processes to ensure managerial and administrative staff are suitably qualified and experienced.

As part of the staff recruitment process, the curricula vitae of prospective staff are reviewed, and interviews are undertaken before appointment. Staff qualifications are verified and appropriate records are maintained.

An effective system for reviewing the performance of staff is implemented at the completion of each course. This results in planned improvements and efficient and effective support to ensure the delivery of a high quality of education.

4. Publicity material, both printed and electronic, gives a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the provider and its programmes

4.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the provider's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered. Yes No

4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. Yes No

This standard is judged to be: Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Promotional literature is clear, accurate and comprehensive and includes appropriate summaries of the content and aims of each core academic course.

There is also good information provided about other aspects of the course, the accommodation and the extra-curricular activities.

The information provided has been updated to inform participants of the recent changes to remote learning and individual tutorials. This has ensured that participants are well informed about the changes to the course provision.

Course descriptions are accurate and up to date. As a result, participants can make informed choices about their courses.

5. The provider takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable participants for its courses

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|-----|---|---|
| 5.1 | Entry requirements for each course, including those relating to language ability, are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective participants. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 5.2 | A formal application process ensures that participants meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 5.3 | The provider replies to all application enquiries promptly and appropriately and briefs all stakeholders properly on the nature and requirements of its programmes. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 5.4 | Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Entry requirements are set at an appropriate level and are clearly stated in the course descriptions. Online course descriptions are made available to prospective participants. This ensures that participants are clearly informed about the course requirements.

As part of the application process, participants provide a statement of intent, a supporting letter from a teacher and evidence of their qualifications, which are verified. Participants are interviewed online. An appropriate International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score is recommended. This ensures that participants are appropriately qualified and motivated for successful completion of the course.

Participant applications are responded to promptly. Participants are provided with appropriate and comprehensive information on the courses available.

The Provider works closely with a small number of agents. The agents are appropriately briefed on the nature of the course and intended participants. Agents receive a monthly newsletter to ensure they are regularly updated on any changes and developments.

Agents are also provided with the participant handbook, as they will often be the first point of contact for parents who may have questions. Feedback on any changes made to courses is provided to agents in the monthly newsletter. Prospective participants are, therefore, fully informed of the Provider's offer prior to application.

Participants provide feedback on the agents. This is used well to evaluate the agents' effectiveness.

6. There is an appropriate policy on participant attendance and effective procedures and systems to enforce it

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|-----|---|---|
| 6.1 | There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on participant attendance and punctuality. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 6.2 | Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all participants, collated centrally and reviewed. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 6.3 | Participant absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Attendance at face-to-face classes and extracurricular activities is mandatory, unless any absence has been agreed in advance. The policy on attendance and punctuality is made clear in the handbook that is given to each participant. This results in high levels of attendance and punctuality in all sessions.

Records of attendance include punctuality records and are maintained for all participants and regularly reviewed.

If a face-to-face participant is absent, trainers will alert the Managing Director or Director of Studies, who are onsite throughout the course, so that they can follow up absences immediately. Trainers contact online participants if they do not attend their planned session.

In the event that online participants' circumstances have changed, a review of the timetable enables them to change the time of their tutorials to suit their needs.

7. The provider regularly obtains and records feedback from participants and other stakeholders and takes appropriate action where necessary

7.1	The provider has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from participants and other stakeholders (such as staff, partner providers and employers) on all aspects of the provider's provision, including formal participant representation where appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7.2	Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7.3	The feedback is reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7.4	There is a mechanism for reporting on the provider's response to the feedback to the participant body.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Staff are in formal and informal contact with participants throughout the course and will act on comments and feedback during that period as appropriate.

A formal review process, including managers, trainers and participants, occurs mid-course, resulting in timely changes to courses. Feedback is gathered regularly from online participants and responded to in a timely way. A formal review process is conducted at the end of each course. This has resulted in changes to curriculum content that better reflect the needs and interests of the participants.

Managers effectively review participant and trainer feedback annually. They analyse the feedback data in order to identify and prioritise improvements to the quality of the course content and its delivery. This has resulted in clear actions for improvement and high levels of participant satisfaction.

8. The provider has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement

8.1	There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the provider's performance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8.2	Reports are compiled which present the results of the provider's reviews and incorporate action plans.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8.3	Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider regularly observes all face-to-face trainers and seeks detailed feedback from participants at the end of each course. The Director of Studies works with individual trainers to ensure that the material covered in sessions is appropriate for participants and consistent with the course as advertised. The Director of Studies informally monitors online learning delivery by joining the session and is able to provide effective feedback to trainers. However, this process needs to be formalised.

Managers complete an annual report, which includes relevant improvement action plans. The action plans reflect a range of feedback gathered from participants and trainers on all aspects of the participant experience.

Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed. This results in continuous improvement of the participant experience.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Director of Studies is suitably qualified and experienced and demonstrates a clear commitment to the delivery of good-quality academic content at an appropriate level for individual participants. Trainers are consulted on course design and development. Inspection findings confirm that trainers feel valued and involved in improving the quality of the education.

Trainers prepare plans that reflect the prior knowledge and interest of individual participants. This results in lessons that participants find highly engaging and that meet their individual needs and interests.

The online tutorial style of teaching and the bespoke curriculum ensure participants' active engagement and prepare them well for face-to-face teaching. Online participants access one-hour, one-to-one tutorial sessions with trainers, replicating the tutorial model used in the face-to-face summer school. The focus of the tutorial is agreed with the participant.

Trainers delivering face-to-face courses receive effective written feedback, which they use to improve their practice. Trainers have access to professional dialogue with each other and with managers during the review phase at the end of the courses and share areas to improve or examples of best practice.

The process for the acquisition of academic resources results in appropriate materials being provided to trainers when required. Online teaching materials are of a high quality and are appropriate to the level of the course.

All venues used for face-to-face learning have reliable wireless connection. This allows participants to access good quality online learning resources. The trainers are members of the UoC. Therefore, all participants have full access to online library resources. This ensures that participants have access to high-quality resources that support their learning effectively.

The online teaching sessions, which are delivered as one-to-one tutorials, ensure that regular feedback is provided to participants on their work. Trainers plan effectively to meet the needs and interests of the participants. They provide good feedback on the participants' progress both orally and in writing. However, observations of online learning need to be formalized to enable trainers to receive written feedback.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Director of Studies is appropriately experienced, including supporting the pastoral care of participants. The Director of Studies is the designated Safeguarding lead and is not trained to the appropriate level to support the role effectively. An appropriate safeguarding qualification is required to ensure they have a suitable qualification for this role.

Participants, parents and agents receive a comprehensive handbook that provides useful information about the course. The participant handbook is effective in identifying useful and appropriate advice about how to prepare for the course and what to expect at the summer school or whilst undertaking the online learning.

The participants receive a comprehensive briefing prior to attending classes. Participants are given contact numbers to use at any time, in case of problems.

Participants are provided with clear policies in relation to bullying and harassment, including potential appropriate sanctions.

Trainers undergo appropriate pre-employment checks to ensure their suitability to work with younger participants. They complete appropriate online safeguarding training and attend a short basic safeguarding course in advance of the programme. This ensures that staff are fully aware of their responsibilities.

Managers understand the need to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism and have assessed that risks are low. The Provider's policy and guidance on risks relating to radicalisation and extremism cover procedures for raising any concerns that might arise. However, plans for providing training to support staff in preventing radicalisation and extremism have not yet been implemented.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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

Comments

The UoC's college premises are appropriate for the delivery of effective teaching and learning. They are of a satisfactory standard of repair, decoration and cleanliness.

The accommodation is appropriate for online teaching and tutorial activities.

Participants and staff on face-to-face courses can use appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces to relax and for consuming food and drink. Meetings can be held effectively in the teaching rooms.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Effective teaching and learning results in high levels of participant satisfaction.

High-quality trainers provide a stimulating learning experience for all participants.

Effective course review and development processes have resulted in an enhanced learning experience for participants.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

The Director of Studies must complete an appropriate safeguarding qualification.

High Medium Low

All managers and trainers must complete training in protecting participants from the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.

High Medium Low

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

It is recommended that the observation process for online learning is formalised.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE