



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Academic Summer Limited

ADDRESS: 7 Soundwell Road
Staple Hill
Bristol
BS16 4QG

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mrs Helen Lami

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 19 August 2020

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 26 November 2020

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Academic Summer Limited (Academic Summer/the Provider) is a private limited company owned by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Academic Summer was established in 2008 to deliver residential non-certificated academic courses in English Language, Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies and Sciences to school-age participants. Academic Summer also offers online summer schools.

The day-to-day running of Academic Summer is carried out by the CEO. The CEO is supported by a permanent management team consisting of the Head of Operations, Head of Human Resources (HR) and Academic, Head of Marketing, and Head of Finance.

Academic Summer aims to inspire and challenge domestic and international participants across a range of academic subjects and specialist programmes offered in person and online.

Academic Summer's registered office is in Bristol, with the permanent management team working remotely or at the summer course locations. Residential summer courses are offered at independent schools in the United Kingdom (UK). Recently, schools in North Somerset, London and Cambridge have been used as locations for the summer courses.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Academic Summer offers short courses for participants aged from 12 to 14 years in preparation for years 9 and 10 in UK schools. The subjects offered include English, Mathematics, Sciences, Social Studies and Arts. In addition, participants aged from 15 to 17 are offered English, Sciences, Academic Skills, Social Studies and Mathematics to support their studies in years 11 and 12 of the UK school system. Younger participants, aged seven to 12, follow the Adventurers programme. This consists of a series of themed activities based around English, Science, Mathematics, Social Science and Arts. All participants also complete an interdisciplinary leadership course.

Academic Summer delivers the same subjects to participants through its online platform. Leisure activities, such as world dance, keep fit, cookery and book clubs are also offered online. A number of specialist courses are also available online, including preparation for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) examinations. Online courses in Medicine, Computer Science and Engineering are available for participants intending to study these subjects at university.

The courses are aimed at a mix of native English speakers and international participants looking to improve their opportunities within the UK education system. All courses use the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach to teaching academic subjects in English to non-native speakers. Therefore, the teaching of English is integrated into the teaching of all Academic Summer's face-to-face and online courses.

At the time of the inspection, eight participants were enrolled on residential courses in Cambridge and four were following online programmes. A small majority of participants are aged seven to 14 years and the remainder are aged from 15 to 18 years. There are approximately equal numbers of male and female participants. Half the participants are from countries in the European Union (EU), for example Poland and Italy, and half are from non-EU countries, for example Japan and Cameroon.

Enrolment for the residential and online courses is continuous throughout July and August. Residential participants' arrival and departure day is a Saturday.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out remotely by one inspector over one day. The inspector held online meetings with members of the senior management team, and with participants. Two online lessons were observed, and one in-

person lesson at the Cambridge venue was also observed. A comprehensive selection of documentation was made available before and during the inspection. The inspector was given an online tour of the Cambridge venue, including classrooms, a science laboratory, and the art and design teaching facilities. The Provider cooperated fully with the inspection process.

4. Inspection history

| Inspection type | Date |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Stage 2 | 21 January 2010 |
| Stage 3 | 27-28 July 2010 |
| Interim | 1 August 2011 |
| Re-accreditation | 5 & 30 July 2013 |
| Interim | 26 July 2016 |
| Re-accreditation | 10-12 July 2018 |

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

The CEO is now the sole owner of Academic Summer following the resignation of the second Director.

The introduction of the platform, Academic Summer @home, allows the Provider to offer its courses online.

A Leadership Programme for all participants has been introduced as a link between the academic and leisure aspects of Academic Summer's courses.

2. Response to actions points in last report

4.2 The Provider must ensure that all available publicity and information materials are explicit as to the non-certificated nature of the courses on offer for participants aged between 13 and 18 year-olds to avoid any misunderstandings of their relationship to GCSE, A level and IB specifications.

Academic Summer has revised its publicity and information materials to make clear that its academic courses are non-certificated enrichment programmes and are not formally linked to any accredited qualifications.

8.2 8.3 The Provider must formalise its review and action planning to ensure that targets reflect stakeholders' comments and that progress against targets can be measured to enhance the provider's strategic planning.

The Provider has a comprehensive business plan, based in part on stakeholder comments, with detailed short, medium, and long-term action plans and targets and the criteria by which success will be measured.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider should provide quantitative information on the success of its courses.

Academic Summer uses a number of relevant quantitative data sets to illustrate success since its establishment in 2008 and to inform its strategic planning. These are published in the Provider's business plan.

The Provider should encourage peer observations as part of staff development so that good practice can be effectively shared.

The Provider encourages new members of the teaching staff to observe and team-teach with more experienced teachers in the classroom and to watch recordings of experienced teachers delivering online sessions. These initiatives expose new teachers to good practice in the delivery of Academic Summer's courses and help them to improve their own practice.

The Provider should introduce a common format for lesson planning to further facilitate the monitoring of lessons and of Content Language Integrated Learning.

Academic Summer has introduced a suitable scheme of learning template for teachers to use in planning lessons for each week of a summer course. This ensures consistency of approach across subjects and the effective monitoring of lesson content, and teaching and learning methods.

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

Academic Summer has a clear management structure that is recorded in its organisational chart. The members of the management team have detailed knowledge of the Provider's operations, having been promoted from within. This allows each member to carry out their responsibilities effectively and to support each other well. All managers are present at summer course venues, and thus communication with delivery staff is good and results in the smooth running of the courses.

The CEO and managers work remotely during the year, so direct administrative support is not necessary. At the summer course venues, suitable administrative support is provided by the host schools. Policies and procedures are comprehensively documented and available to all staff electronically.

Management staff are subject to ongoing team and individual appraisals, which they see as positive and developmental and help them to expand their experience and develop their management skills.

Academic Summer has comprehensive and accurate information on its website, including very informative video clips from past summer courses. This ensures that participants can make an informed choice as to which course and location will best meet their needs.

Entry requirements for each course are clearly stated, particularly in the case of English language proficiency. In addition to checking applicants' qualifications, Academic Summer asks them to complete its own English language test to be certain that a potential participant's language skills will allow them to be fully involved in the summer programme.

Academic Summer works closely with its agents to ensure that they have up-to-date information on the summer courses running at each location. Each of the Provider's managers has responsibility for participant recruitment in a geographical region and attends the recruitment events organised by the agents, to quality assure the recruitment process.

Participant attendance is carefully recorded and monitored throughout the course and any absences are followed up immediately. Participants confirmed that they were aware of the attendance and punctuality policies, but they were not aware of any participant having been absent from, or late to, an activity.

Participant feedback is obtained at the start and end of a participant's stay. The initial feedback is a check that participants are happy, and to make staff aware of any areas of concern that can be quickly remedied. Participants are asked for formal feedback at the end of their course. This feedback appropriately informs planning for the subsequent year's courses. Feedback from parents is only obtained anecdotally through agents. The performance data is collected centrally and is effectively used to inform the Provider's operational and strategic planning.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Responsibility for the running of the summer courses is shared among the management team to ensure consistency of participant experience. Teaching is observed to ensure the quality of teaching and learning in relation to the age and abilities of the participants. Resources are available to teachers and participants either from the host school or from Academic Summer's own stock. Teachers are well qualified and experienced in their fields. In the in-person lesson observed, several appropriate techniques were used to engage the participants effectively. These included teacher input, question and answer, oral feedback and a video clip.

The online sessions were less successful, requiring more interaction between the teacher and the participant and the use of resources that were better suited to online delivery. Teachers teaching the

online courses would benefit from undertaking training in good practice in online delivery to ensure active participant involvement and the use of resources tailored to effective online teaching and learning.

Participants commented on how much they enjoyed the leadership course as it allowed them to be very imaginative, as well as honing their skills in, for example, team working, presentations and information technology (IT).

End-of-course reports are detailed and identify what the participant has achieved during their time with Academic Summer.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The management team at each venue has overall responsibility for the welfare of the participants. The members of the teams are effective in ensuring that participants feel safe, both at the host venue and on excursions. This was confirmed by the participants, who also commented that they felt well looked after.

All participants receive good useful advice prior to the commencement of the course regarding visa and health requirements and receive a monthly newsletter. International participants receive copies of handbooks and course and venue details five weeks before the start of their course. Parents can access further details online. Once participants arrive at the course venue, they receive a comprehensive induction programme. Participants confirmed that the induction programme was very helpful in introducing them to the venue and the immediate locality. Inspection findings confirm this view.

Suitable procedures are in place for dealing with any abusive or discriminatory behaviour, although such instances are rare. Religious and cultural considerations are taken into account, for example in the provision of prayer rooms and menus.

All the management team have undertaken safeguarding training to an appropriate level. The activities and trips are structured to ensure the safety of participants. All activities and trips are included in the overall cost of the course and are fully supervised by Academic Summer's staff.

Academic Summer has a comprehensive policy and procedures, including staff training, to protect participants from radicalisation and extremism, supported by a detailed risk assessment. There are clear procedures for dealing with complaints, should any arise.

The participants confirmed that they were very happy with the quality and cleanliness of their study bedrooms and associated facilities. Staff confirmed that boys and girls are accommodated on separate floors in the accommodation. A suitable member of staff is on the premises at all times when participants are in their rooms to ensure effective supervision.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider has secure arrangements for the use of the Cambridge venue for the summer period.

Access to the Cambridge venue is secure with 24-hour security and extensive CCTV coverage. Participants have key cards that record their whereabouts at any time.

The virtual tour included well-equipped, large classrooms that are in an excellent state of repair. The science laboratory was appropriately furnished and the art room well equipped. Participants confirmed

that the classrooms and specialist teaching areas were of a good size and well equipped to support their academic work, leadership course and leisure activities.

Staff confirmed that the facilities available to them were suitable for both work and relaxation.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

Strong leadership and vision from the CEO assure the success of the Provider.

A flexible management team ensures the efficient operation of the Provider and its members are committed to the successful development of Academic Summer.

There are high standards of participant welfare, so that all participants enjoy their time with Academic Summer.

An innovative interdisciplinary leadership course successfully links the academic and leisure activities.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

The Provider must ensure that all teachers providing online courses receive training in effective online teaching and learning methods.

High Medium Low

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

The Provider should develop a formal system for capturing feedback from participants' parents.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE
