INDEPENDENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LANGUAGE PROVIDER (IELP)
SCHEME DOCUMENT

BAC

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

RAISING STANDARDS IN THE GLOBAL EDUCATION MARKET

Contents

1. Introduction

BAC's Independent English Language Provider (IELP) scheme accreditation is a voluntary quality assurance scheme for English language providers.

The aim of the scheme is to acknowledge the quality of institutions and training providers that are outstanding in the field of English language education. The scheme provides them with the opportunity to become accredited by a globally-recognised accreditation body.

2. Eligibility for accreditation

All private or public education providers eligible to apply for IELP accreditation provided that all of the following requirements are met:

➔ The provider is licensed by a local, regional, or national licensing agency if such licensing is mandatory and/or holds accreditation from a nationally recognised educational or professional body and/or meets all mandatory requirements to operate.

➔ The provider must be providing courses to prepare learners for examinations from one of the following awarding bodies:
  a) LanguageCert
  b) Trinity College
  c) Cambridge English
  d) IELTS (International English Language Test System)
  e) TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language).

To meet this eligibility criteria, the provider can also offer an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) pathway course. In this case, the course must lead to further study with a provider whose qualifications are recognised by UK ENIC and/or the national accrediting authority where relevant.

➔ In addition to the above courses the provider can also offer English language courses that include one or more of the following:
  — General courses for adults and/or children
  — English for specific purposes, for example Business English, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and preparation for study in an English-speaking country
  — One-to-one
  — Online, Distance, and Blended Learning (ODBL) English language learning programmes

➔ BAC's evaluation of the provider will not assess

the role of any awarding body and will not include an evaluation of the assessment procedures used in determining the final grades awarded or the quality management procedures used by the awarding body.

➔ Effective control of the provider is the responsibility of an accountable management.

➔ The provider is led by a proprietor or designated principal/director who must have clearly defined responsibilities for the running of the provider and for the quality of its work.

➔ There are no grounds for believing the proprietor, principal/director, or any other senior manager to be unfit to be responsible for the provider.

➔ The provider has provided an IELP programme for a minimum period of two years. One exception is that BAC may approve accreditation at an earlier date, although this would normally only be available to providers that are part of a larger organisation that meets the above requirements.

➔ If the provider offers courses that are delivered through ODBL, the managerial, administrative, and academic staff must have an understanding of the special requirements of these modes of study.

The final decision regarding a provider's eligibility for the accreditation scheme rests with BAC.

2.1 Additional conditions for the IELP scheme

➔ Accreditation relates only to a specific provider and may not be used in relation to large multi-branch providers unless all branches have been awarded accreditation. BAC reserves the right to decide whether it is more appropriate for organisations to seek accreditation for the totality of their operations or in respect of their separate parts. Unless BAC determines otherwise, where an accredited provider is a branch of a larger organisation, accreditation will relate only to that branch.

➔ Providers that wish to apply for accreditation for all their branches must first contact the BAC head office to discuss their application.

➔ Accreditation by BAC does not remove the obligations of accredited providers to comply with relevant local statutory and regulatory requirements.

→ Any contractual agreements between BAC and an accredited provider or any disputes arising out of the award, refusal, or withdrawal of accreditation by BAC shall be subject to English law.

3. Accreditation process

BAC's IELP accreditation scheme covers the full range of English language education activities offered by the provider and is not restricted to specific courses within the total provision.

A provider is awarded accreditation for a period of four years, subject to a satisfactory interim inspection and meeting all the responsibilities of an accredited provider (see the Accreditation Handbook for details). Accreditation does not apply to activities that are promoted and delivered under a different name unless BAC has given specific approval for the inclusion of such activities within the provider's accreditation.

Accreditation is based on an inspection of the full range of a provider's programmes. It also requires evidence that the management will maintain acceptable standards during the period of accreditation and operate within the requirements of any relevant local legislation. Providers will be assessed against the full standard set of inspection criteria described below and must meet all the minimum standards.

Prospective applicants are invited to contact BAC's head office to discuss their eligibility for the scheme. Following this, the provider is required to send in an initial submission that requires evidence of financial stability and viability, provenance, recognition and accreditation achieved, and references to be produced attesting to the outstanding reputation of the provider. If BAC is satisfied that the eligibility criteria have been met, providers are asked to submit a formal application.

This rigorous application process with its different levels of scrutiny is designed to ensure that applicants that are not of the required standard do not spend time and effort preparing the full application documentation. There is no right of appeal at this stage of the application process.

4. Accreditation cycle

Accredited providers must apply for re-accreditation every four years and will then undergo a further full inspection. In considering a report on an accredited provider, the Accreditation Committee may either award re-accreditation for another four years, defer a decision pending the resolution of minor issues, or withdraw accreditation from the provider should it have failed to maintain the standards required. Irrespective of the outcome, the inspection report is released to the provider along with the decision of the Accreditation Committee.

5. Inspection process

The primary method for assessing whether a provider meets the standards required for accreditation is an on-site inspection carried out by independent inspectors who are appointed and trained by BAC. No provider will be awarded accreditation or re-accreditation without a full inspection of its provision as described within the five areas of assessment.

Minimum standards
Section 10 of this document sets out the minimum standards required of an accredited provider as well as clarifying the likely scope of an inspection and the specific items assessed by BAC's inspectors. The provider should use these sections as a basis for self-evaluation before the inspection.

The areas assessed at a full inspection are grouped into five sections:
— Management, staffing, administration, and quality assurance
— Teaching, learning, and assessment
— Learner welfare
— Premises and facilities
— ODBL (if applicable)

The management of quality and the provider's quality assurance procedures are assessed throughout each area of inspection.

Document review
As well as setting out the minimum standards required, a sample list of the documents to be scrutinised, in relation to each section, is also included in this document. A full list of required documentation will be provided by the lead inspector during the preparation for the inspection. The inspectors will need to see this documentation as part of their evaluation as to whether the provider meets BAC's minimum standards for IELP accreditation. Some of the documents must be included in the initial submission and application form and others must be made available before and during the inspection.

Legal and regulatory compliance
All new applicants and those applying for re-accreditation are required to sign a declaration stating that the provider complies with all relevant statutory requirements in force in the country of operation in relation to such matters as health and safety,

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

It is the personal responsibility of the head of the provider to ensure that all requirements are met. BAC inspectors will not inspect the local compliance requirements but will note any observed breach of regulations. This will be conveyed to the Accreditation Committee as a "no confidence" judgement in the ability of the provider to self-assess in these matters and will call into question the integrity of the senior management who will have endorsed the declaration. Although the compliance with statutory requirements is not a BAC minimum standard, evidence of non-compliance will provide the Accreditation Committee with grounds for refusal of accreditation.

A report of the full inspection is considered by the Accreditation Committee, which decides to award, defer, or refuse accreditation based on the evidence of whether all minimum standards have been met and that there are systems in place to ensure continuing compliance.

Any provider that has been unsuccessful in either gaining or retaining accreditation may appeal against the decision of the Accreditation Committee.

6. Accreditation fees

Accredited providers are required to pay annual accreditation fees that are due in September each year. The exact fee payable depends on the number of learner hours/weeks over the previous year. Accurate figures must be supplied to BAC once per year on request. If such figures are not supplied by the deadline given, the full maximum accreditation fee will be charged. Failure to pay the annual accreditation fees by the deadline given on the invoice will result in suspension and the possible withdrawal of accreditation.

7. Accreditation statements and marks

Providers that have been awarded accreditation may use the following statements of accreditation in their promotional materials, subject to certain conditions:

➜ "accredited by the British Accreditation Council as an Independent English Language Provider."
➜ "accredited by BAC as an Independent English Language Provider."
➜ "BAC accredited as an Independent English Language Provider."

8. The further following conditions apply:

➜ Accreditation covers all eligible provision that you have declared to BAC.
➜ Accreditation applies to your organisation as a whole and must not be construed as accreditation or validation of individual IELP programmes or awards.
➜ Accreditation applies only to the specific provider whose application BAC has received and not to any partner, branch, or otherwise connected providers.
➜ You must avoid any inaccurate or misleading statements concerning your accreditation and if uncertain should contact BAC to seek clarification on what is acceptable. Any breach of this condition may lead to the suspension or withdrawal of your accreditation.
➜ If your accreditation is withdrawn you must remove all statements or claims of accreditation by BAC from your promotional and other material as soon as is reasonably practicable and must immediately refrain from representing yourself as BAC accredited.
➜ Unaccredited providers 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.

Once accredited, providers may use the BAC logo in their promotional materials, subject to certain conditions.

9. Contacting BAC

Further guidance and details of the generic requirements and responsibilities for BAC accredited providers can be found in the Accreditation Handbook. Please contact info@the-bac.org for further information.

10. Accreditation scheme standards

Inspection area – management, staffing, administration, and quality assurance

Minimum standards 1–7

1. The provider is effectively managed

1.1 The provider has a written statement of its mission and goals that effectively guides its activities, is communicated to all stakeholders, and is effectively implemented and regularly reviewed.

1.2 The management structure is clearly defined, documented, and understood, including the role and extent of the authority of any owners, trustees, advisors or governing body.

1.3 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.

1.4 There is a formal system to ensure that all managerial and administrative staff have access to appropriate continuing professional development activities.

1.5 There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff including those working at the delivery venue or remotely.

1.6 The provider conducts its financial matters professionally, transparently, and with appropriate probity.

2. The administration of the provider is effective

2.1 Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties and are effective in carrying them out.

2.2 The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the provider.

2.3 The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented, and understood.

2.4 Policies, procedures, and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the provider.

2.5 Data collection and collation systems are effective in supporting the administration of the provider.

2.6 The provider maintains accurate and easily accessible contact details for its learners including, in the case of young learners, details of their parents/guardians.

2.7 Learner and tutor records are easily accessible, sufficient, accurately maintained, and up-to-date.

2.8 The provider has a robust security system and policies in place for protecting the data of its staff, learners and self-employed tutors.

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.

3.2 Experience and qualifications claimed are verified and documented before employment.

3.3 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing staff performance.

4. Publicity material gives a comprehensive, up-to-date, and accurate description of the provider and its curriculum

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.

4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date. This should include details about the course fees and any additional costs.

4.3 All material that is published in English is proofread and checked for grammatical accuracy.

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

5.1 Entry requirements for each course are set at an appropriate level and are clearly stated in the course descriptions seen by prospective learners.

5.2 A formal application process ensures that learners meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified and documented.

5.3 Learners are properly briefed on the nature and requirements of the courses for which they apply and all application enquiries are responded to promptly and appropriately.

5.4 If any recruitment agents are employed, they should be properly selected, briefed, monitored, and evaluated.

5.5 All learners receive a comprehensive initial assessment of their language ability to ensure that they are placed on the correct level course to meet their needs.

6. There is an appropriate policy on learner attendance and effective procedures and systems to implement it, where appropriate

6.1 There is an appropriate clear and published policy on learner attendance and punctuality which is communicated to all learners and other stakeholders.

6.2 Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all learners, collated centrally, and reviewed at least weekly.

6.3 Learner absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action is taken.

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

7.1 There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the provider's performance.

7.2 The provider has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from learners and other stakeholders such as staff, partner institutions, and employers, on all aspects of the provider's provision, including formal learner representation, where appropriate.

7.3 Initial, on-going, and end-of-course feedback is obtained, recorded, and analysed on a regular basis.

7.4 The feedback is reviewed by management and appropriate action is taken.

7.5 There is a mechanism for reporting back to the learners about the provider's response to their feedback.

7.6 Reports are compiled, at least annually, that present the results of the provider's performance reviews and incorporate action plans. Reports include analysis of year-on-year results on learner satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results, and completion rates.

7.8 Action plans, including those for improvement, are implemented and regularly reviewed with outcomes reported to the management.

7.9 Good practice is effectively disseminated across the provider.

Examples of documentation required

➜ Up-to-date organisation chart or outline description of the staff structure with names of post-holders and individual roles
➜ The strategy/development plan including strategic targets
➜ List of committees/boards together with their terms of reference and membership
➜ Detailed job descriptions for all senior, academic, and administrative staff
➜ Up-to-date prospectus, course brochures, and other marketing material
➜ Copies of audits and academic reviews carried out by or on behalf of the awarding bodies or partnership institutions
➜ Performance data maintained by the provider, for example, examination pass rates, stakeholder feedback scores, and attendance rates
➜ Annual performance reviews against strategic targets at provider, department, course, and programme level
➜ Notes from external audits
➜ Samples and summaries of any learner and other stakeholder feedback including completed feedback questionnaires
➜ Action plans for dealing with stakeholder feedback
➜ Documentation relating to policies and procedures for informing stakeholders of the response made to their feedback
➜ Internal quality assurance documentation including copies of any policies used as a means of quality management
➜ External quality assurance documentation
➜ Key policies underpinning the running of the provider, for example, relating to staff recruitment, staff performance monitoring and staff development, quality assurance, assessment, and learner welfare, etc.

➜ Staff and learner handbooks
➜ Minutes of relevant committee and/or board meetings
➜ Minutes of staff meetings
➜ Detailed curricula vitae for all staff including all academic/teaching staff to include evidence of academic and teaching qualifications
➜ Staff appraisal procedures and completed documentation
➜ Evidence of continuing professional development, training opportunities, and individual development logs
➜ Staff disciplinary and grievance procedures
➜ Samples of administration correspondence with learners
➜ Completed learner application forms and any learner contracts
➜ Evidence of attendance monitoring including class registers for each course/programme
➜ Learner files with details of registration, enrolment, attendance, and qualifications
➜ Staff personnel files and records
➜ Up-to-date signed contracts of employment for all staff
➜ Self-employment contracts/agreements for all self-employed staff
➜ Briefing materials for agents
➜ Other management and administrative policies, procedures, and systems

Inspection area – teaching, learning, and assessment

Minimum standards 8–15

8. Academic management is effective

8.1 There is a written curriculum statement that is supported by appropriate schemes of work and lesson plans, leads to an effective learning experience, and is mapped to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or equivalent national standards.

8.2 There is a suitably qualified and experienced principal or owner who is capable of managing the IELP provision effectively.

8.3 There is an appropriate director of studies and/or academic management team with responsibility for teaching, learning, and assessment. The director of studies and/or the head of the academic management team must hold at least an appropriate internationally recognised diploma or a master's Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) qualification.

8.4 Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered. The special educational needs and disabilities of the learners must be considered when allocating classrooms and a risk assessment undertaken if appropriate.

8.5 The allocation of tutors to classes provides a consistent learning experience.

8.6 There are formalised plans for providing cover for absent tutors.

8.7 The appraisal procedures for teaching staff incorporate regular classroom observation with new tutors being observed within at least two weeks of their starting teaching.

8.8 Tutors, including those who are recently qualified and those who are not qualified but are undergoing training, are supported in their continuing professional development and are enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance learning.

9. Courses are planned and delivered in ways that enable learners to succeed

9.1 Courses are designed and delivered in ways that allow learners to develop the competencies and skills that will be required for final examinations or assessments.

9.2 Schemes of work and lesson plans provide evidence of planning and should be appropriate to the length and type of course delivered. The needs of individual learners are also considered as part of the planning.

9.3 Lessons and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the provider for internal awards and/or the awarding body for external awards.

9.4 Learners are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills.

9.5 Any required coursework, tutorials, and revision periods are scheduled in advance.

9.6 The academic or professional backgrounds, motivations, and special educational needs and disabilities of learners are taken into account in the classroom delivery of the course.

9.7 The planning of courses will consider the continuous nature of learner enrolment if applicable.

10. Tutors are suitable for the courses they are allocated and effective in delivering them

10.1 The majority of tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced. They must have, as a minimum, a Trinity Certificate or a Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) qualification that must include a minimum of six hours of observed, assessed teaching practice.

10.2 Tutors who do not have the above qualifications must be working towards achieving them and must be assigned to classes appropriate to their teaching and language competence.

10.3 Tutors provide exemplary models of spoken and written English.

10.4 Tutors have a good level of English language knowledge as well as pedagogic and communication skills that allow them to deliver the course content effectively.

10.5 Tutors employ effective strategies to involve all learners in active participation in order to develop their accuracy and fluency in English.

11. Learners and tutors are provided with access to appropriate resources and study materials

12. Learners receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, which are effectively monitored

12.1 There is a comprehensive and appropriate initial placement procedure that assesses the learners' starting level and suitability so that their progress can be effectively monitored during their studies.

12.2 Schemes of work include a schedule of formative and summative assessments that are made available to both tutors and learners.

12.3 Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of learners who are not making satisfactory progress in order to provide appropriate learning support and/or to enable learners to change class.

12.4 Those learners who are undertaking a course leading to an external award are made aware of how their progress relates to their proposed external award.

12.5 A framework is in place to enable the effective evaluation of overall learner progress and performance against the CEFR or equivalent national standards.

12.6 Oral and written feedback is given to individual learners on a regular basis that is tailored to meet their specific needs and is constructive in its nature and delivery.

12.7 Learners have appropriate access to academic support outside class hours.

13. There is a clear rationale for courses leading to unaccredited or internal awards

13.1 Courses are clearly described and mapped to the corresponding level of the CEFR or equivalent national standards.

13.2 There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purpose of employment or further study.

13.3 External moderators are involved in the assessment process.

14. There are satisfactory procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment

14.1 The provider complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration.

14.2 If internal assessments, external examinations, or pathway programmes are provided, the provider takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating and plagiarism and penalise offenders.

14.3 There are clear procedures for learners to appeal against their assessment marks.

15. There is appropriate provision of advice for learners intending to proceed to employment or higher/further education

15.1 Learners have access to advice from a designated staff member on further study and career opportunities.

15.2 If the provider offers courses preparing learners for higher education, they have access to prospectuses and to advice from a designated staff member both on selecting courses and institutions and on the application process.

15.3 Learners are informed about the recognition of the qualifications for further study or employment.

Inspection area – learner welfare

Minimum standards 16 - 21

16. Learners receive welfare support appropriate to their age, background, and circumstances

16.1 There is at least one named staff member responsible for learner welfare who is suitably trained and/or experienced, accessible to all learners, and available to provide advice and guidance.

16.2 Learners receive appropriate information, advice and guidance before the start and throughout their course of study.

16.3 Learners receive an appropriate induction and relevant information at the beginning of their course.

16.4 Learners receive appropriate information on the pastoral and emergency support available and referrals to external specialists, as required, in connection with learners' mental health and well-being.

16.5 The provider has policies to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with an abusive behaviour, including cyberbullying, and these are effectively implemented.

16.6 Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place for learners under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults, which are regularly reviewed.

16.7 Effective arrangements, including a policy, risk assessment and staff training, are in place to protect learners from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

16.8 There is an e-policy in place that references any existing staff and learner codes of conduct and covers learners' on-site use of social media and devices such as mobile telephones, tablets and cameras.

16.9 The provider collects contact details for learners and their emergency contact, and appropriate staff can access the information quickly and easily, in and out of normal operating hours.

17. International learners are provided with specific advice and assistance

17.1 International learners receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and living in the country.

17.2 International learners receive appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area.

17.3 Information and advice specific to the learners continues to be available throughout the course of study.

17.4 The provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations.

18. The fair treatment of learners is ensured

18.1 Learners apply for and are enrolled in courses under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions, which include information about what they will be required to purchase in order to take the course.

18.2 Learners have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course.

18.3 Learners are advised of BAC's complaints procedure.

19. Where residential accommodation is offered, it is fit for purpose, well maintained, and appropriately supervised

19.1 Any residential accommodation is clean, safe, and of a standard that is suited to the needs of learners.

19.2 Any residential accommodation, where learners under the age of 18 are accommodated, is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities.

19.3 A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the ages and needs of learners.

19.4 Appropriate measures are in place to ensure that learners under the age of 18 and those over the age of 18 are separated when allocating accommodation.

20. Where home-stay accommodation is organised, the learners' welfare is ensured and the provider's relationship with hosts is properly managed

20.1 Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation that provides both a safe and comfortable living environment for learners and is appropriately located for travel to and from the provider's location.

20.2 Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before learners are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the provider.

20.3 The provider has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts clearly setting out the rules, terms, and conditions of the provision.

20.4 Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and learners before and during the placement.

20.5 Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for learner feedback and prompt action is taken in the event of problems.

21. The provider has an appropriate social programme for learners and information on leisure activities in the area

21.1 Learners are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation in events and other leisure activities that may be of interest.

21.2 The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of learners.

21.3 The social programme provides appropriate opportunities for learners to extend their learning outside the formal curriculum.

21.4 Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability by the majority of learners.

21.5 Any social activities organised by the provider have been subject to a risk assessment and are supervised by a responsible representative of the provider, if required.

Examples of documentation required

→ Information for learners relating to qualifications and awarding bodies
→ Induction packs for home and international learners
→ Initial guidance documents for learners
→ Complaints policy and procedure documentation
→ Policy documents related to discrimination, bullying, and abusive behaviour
→ Documents related to residential accommodation
→ Documents related to home-stay accommodation including advice for home-stay learners and providers
→ Learners' social programme
→ Careers advice and guidance documentation
→ Safeguarding policy
→ Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (or local equivalent) and training records

Inspection area – premises and facilities

Minimum standards 22–25

22. The provider has secure possession of and access to its premises

22.1 The provider has formal arrangements in place formal that mean it has possession of and/or access to suitable premises.

22.2 The provider has access to suitable external premises for academic or non-academic purposes of a temporary or occasional nature.

23. The premises provide a safe, secure, and clean environment for learners and staff

23.1 Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured.

23.2 Access must allow all users of the provider, including those with special educational needs and disabilities if such learners are enrolled, to enter and leave the premises safely and easily, including in emergency situations.

23.3 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration, and cleanliness.

23.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to learners, staff, and visitors.

23.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises for the display of general information.

23.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of learners and staff accommodated and a suitable area to receive visitors.

23.7 There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness.

23.8 There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms.

24. Classrooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered

24.1 Classrooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them.

24.2 Classrooms and any specialised learning areas are equipped to a level that allows for the effective delivery of each course.

24.3 There are physical and digital facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required for each course.

25. There are appropriate additional facilities for learners and staff

25.1 Learners have access to sufficient space so they can carry out their own private work and/or study.

25.2 Teaching staff have access to sufficient space for preparing lessons and marking work.

25.3 Learners and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate.

25.4 There are individual offices or rooms in which academic staff and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings.

25.5 Administrative offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the provider.

Examples of documentation required

➜ Floor plan of each site being inspected
➜ Booking documentation for delivery venues or training rooms
➜ Health and safety guidance for learners, staff, and visitors
➜ Number, specification, location, and accessibility of computing and related IT resources
➜ A guide to the library and IT facilities

Inspection area – ODBL (if applicable)

Minimum standards 26–33

26. The provider is effectively managed

26.1 There is a suitably qualified manager with experience in the field of ODBL who has responsibility for teaching, learning, achievement, and the management of the tutor body.

26.2 Data collection and collation systems include the accurate logging of online tutor and learner activity.

27. The provider takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable learners for its courses

27.1 Learners are made aware of the necessary level of digital literacy required to follow the programme.

28. Academic management is effective

28.1 The provider has a robust tutor recruitment system that is designed to ensure the safety of the learners. The recruitment process for tutors working remotely includes a face-to-face and/or online interview.

29. Tutors are suitable for the courses they are allocated and effective in delivering them

29.1 The tutors have the expertise to give individualised instructional service to each learner and have an understanding of the special challenges and demands of ODBL.

29.2 All academic enquiries from learners are handled promptly and sympathetically.

30. Learner materials are appropriate to the medium of delivery and are effective

30.1 Course materials are designed for a specific and clearly stated level of study and include appropriate support when necessary.

30.2 Course materials are appropriately presented and sufficiently comprehensive to enable learners to achieve the programme objectives.

30.3 Tutors make effective use of appropriate teaching aids and learning materials, including online resources such as forums and social media platforms.

31. The technology used to deliver the programmes is fit for purpose and effective

31.1 The provider uses appropriate and readily accessible technology to optimise interaction between the provider and the learner and enhance instructional and educational services.

31.2 The provider has access to the services of an experienced IT technician who can ensure that systems are operative at all times and provide appropriate support to learners, tutors, and staff working remotely.

32. There are satisfactory procedures for the administration of examinations and other means of assessment

32.1 The provider has processes to verify that the learner who registers on the programme is the same learner who participates in, completes, and receives the credit.

33. Learners receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background, and circumstances

33.1 After enrolment, the applicant has the benefit of a stated "cooling off" period during which they can cancel the enrolment.

33.2 The provider ensures that learners understand any system requirements and have access to appropriate technical advice to assist with technical problems that are the provider's responsibility.

Examples of documentation required

➜ Evidence of tutor monitoring

Appendix A – Glossary
Definitions and/or explanations of key terms in the BAC standards document.

Active participation – the active and engaged involvement of learners, such as proactive contributions, thoughtful interactions, and enthusiastic participation, rather than passive observation or mere presence.

Adult – whilst the legal definition of an adult varies according to the law of different countries, for the purposes of this scheme, an adult is defined as someone who is aged 18 or over.

Assessment – a generic term for processes that measure learners' learning, skills and understanding.

Awarding bodies – in the UK, an awarding body is an examination board which sets examinations and awards qualifications. It does not always provide the courses that lead to a qualification. Often an awarding body will provide an approval process for providers and those providers, if they meet the criteria, are able to award qualifications that are accredited by that awarding body.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) – a guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe and, increasingly, in other countries. Its main aim is to provide a method of learning, teaching, and assessment that applies to all languages in Europe. There are six reference levels from A1: breakthrough or beginner to C2: mastery or proficiency. For each of these levels there is a description of what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. These six reference levels are widely accepted as the European standard for grading an individual's language proficiency.

Course completion rates – the percentage of learners who have successfully finished and fulfilled all the requirements and attained the learning outcomes or objectives set for the course by the provider within a specified time frame.

Course objectives – brief, clear statements that describe the overall intended purposes and expected results of undertaking a course of study.

Cyberbullying – the use of electronic communication to bully a person, defined as making use of behaviour that is repeated and intended to hurt someone and often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature.

Digital literacy – the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills. It includes knowledge, skills, and behaviours involving the effective use of digital devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and desktop PCs as well as the internet and social media for the purposes of communication and expression.

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) – BAC distinguishes between EAP, English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP), and any other type of EAP or EGAP courses and EAP, EGAP, and any other type of EAP or EGAP pathway courses. Successful completion of an EAP pathway course enables the graduating learners to gain automatic acceptance onto a Higher Education (HE) or Further Education (FE) course, which leads to a qualification that is recognised by UK NARIC and/or the national accrediting authority, where relevant.

The pathway course should be offered by a university language centre or department as a pathway to the university's programmes. The programmes must lead to a qualification that is recognised by UK NARIC and/or the national accrediting authority, where relevant. Alternatively, the pathway course can be offered by a provider with a valid agreement with a HE or FE institution. In this case, the course provides a pathway to that HE or FE institution's courses and leads to a qualification that is recognised by UK NARIC and/or the national accrediting authority, where relevant.

Extremism – holding extreme political or religious views that may deny rights to any group or individual. Extremism can refer to a range of views, for example, racism, homophobia, right-wing ideology and any religious extremism.

Feedback – this could be academic feedback following assessment and could be formal (written) or informal (tutorials and oral) feedback. Feedback is also obtained from different stakeholder groups. This could be in the format of end-of-programme questionnaires or surveys from the learners, internal committees with learner and staff representation, or employer groups where the relevance of the provision to meet local or national requirements is discussed.

Home-stay – an arrangement where learners live with local host families while studying. The host families normally provide accommodation, meals and a supportive environment.

Intended learning outcomes – an intended learning outcome describes in detail what learners should know or be able to do on completion of a learning programme or part thereof. It may relate to knowledge, understanding and skills that the learner did not have before undertaking the programme.

Independent learning – in addition to the contact hours with academic staff, learners are expected to undertake independent learning. Independent learning places increased educational responsibility on the learner for the achievement of objectives and the value of their goals. This can be facilitated through the provision of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) and ensuring that sufficient resources are made available to learners to study independently.

Learner outcomes – this can refer to either the individual or learner cohort outcomes with reference to the intended goals of a course or programme of study or the actual academic achievements of the learners. This is often benchmarked against key performance indicators set by the provider.

Pastoral support – a service that gives help and support to learners as well as provides information, advice and guidance about activities outside the standard academic teaching.

Probity (in relation to financial management) – the provider always follows principles of honesty, integrity, and ethical behaviour when dealing with financial matters, ensuring that all financial decisions and actions are undertaken with complete openness and full responsibility.

Provision – the courses or programmes of study offered by the educational provider.

Plagiarism, including academic malpractice – the act of using someone else's ideas, words, or work without giving proper credit or acknowledgment and presenting it as original work.

Performance review – an internal review of how well the provider has achieved its mission and goals, through which the provider assesses what it does well and what it could develop and/or improve in the future.

Radicalisation – the process of an individual or a group of people adopting extreme political, religious or social doctrine or ideas.

Risk Management – the process of identifying, assessing, and mitigating potential risks or uncertainties that could impact an organisation's strategy and objectives.

Robust security system – a system or set of processes which ensure that all data is protected from unauthorised access and data corruption. They include key management practices that protect data across all applications and platforms.

Safeguarding – a term used in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland to denote measures to protect the health, well-being and safety of children, who are defined as people under the age of 18, and vulnerable adults.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – this typically refers to any special educational needs and disabilities that a learner may have, which have been identified by the provider as requiring specific support to be put in place to assist the learner in completing their studies. An example of the support might be to provide additional time to complete written assessments for learners who are diagnosed as being dyslexic.

Stakeholders – this typically refers to groups who are invested in the welfare and success of a provider and its learners.

  Internal stakeholders – internal stakeholders include current learners, faculty and academic staff, the administrative support staff, and advisory boards or committees such as the governors or trustees.

  External stakeholders – external stakeholders would typically be the local community, employers of graduates, potential learners or applicants, and governments or funding bodies.

Written statement of its mission and goals – most organisations have a published mission and/or vision statement, which sets out the key aims and aspirations of the organisation. This provides a focus for the provider and its future development.

Appendix B – Care of under 18s and vulnerable adults

BAC does not generally inspect compliance with legal and statutory requirements. However, given the importance of Safeguarding in educational contexts and the fact that we have a duty of care to ensure that such providers are fully compliant with all safeguarding requirements, we are obliged to inspect this aspect of the provision. All organisations will still be asked to sign the Declaration of Compliance with Legal and Statutory Requirements, which also covers safeguarding. Key definitions Children: In accordance with the Children Act 1989 and 2004, a child is any person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Vulnerable Adults: A vulnerable adult is generally defined as 'an adult, who is unable to function cognitively or adequately undertake basic day-to-day functions without the help or oversight of someone not impaired in these ways or who is unable to protect him/herself against significant harms or exploitation'. During the inspection, the inspection team will assess an organisation on the following aspects of Safeguarding.

1. Is there a suitable policy for the protection of participants under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults, that is reviewed at least annually?

2. Is there a named DSL (designated safeguarding lead), who is responsible for implementing this policy effectively and responding to child protection allegations?

3. The policy should be a working document (regularly reviewed) which sets out an organisation's commitment to protect children from harm and the procedures in place to support this. It should cover: policy statements, codes of conduct, health and safety, safer recruitment, training, welfare provision and child protection procedures (including: awareness, how to raise concerns, responding to disclosure, named person(s) responsible, the decision-making process, systems for recording and reporting information and handling allegations/incidents). The policy should be clear and relevant to the organisation and up-dated at least annually.

4. Has the provider made the safeguarding policy known to all adults in contact with under 18s through their role with the organisation (including employees, sub-contractors, home-stay hosts, group leaders and volunteers) and provided guidance or training relevant to its effective implementation?

5. Is there a code of conduct for staff effective in covering relationships with participants under the age of 18 and which includes whistleblowing procedures?

6. Are there approved arrangements in place to identify any person who is vulnerable and to ensure the right help and support is provided in a reasonable time scale?

7. Are up-to-date contact details recorded for a parent, carer or person acting in loco parentis for participants aged under 18 (and under 25 for participants with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, if the participants wish so)?

8. Are participants aware of how they can access support or complain, if they do not feel safe?

9. Is there an appropriate course of action to follow should a participant report abuse or concerns about their well-being? In reports of abuse, the arrangements should indicate how to receive disclosures and pass them on to statutory agencies and deal with staff who are subject to allegations.

10. Do recruitment and selection procedures follow safer recruitment best practice? Do the recruitment and selection procedures and other human resources management processes help to deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children, or are otherwise unsuited to work or care for them? Is appropriate information provided to job applicants? Do recruitment materials for roles involving responsibility for or substantial access to under 18s (staff and host families) include reference to the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and inform applicants that suitability checks will be required?

11. Are arrangements made for appropriate checks on staff, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks from 2013 for staff who have regular, unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults, and where appropriate (based on risk assessment) on proprietor/ governors and volunteers. (Note: In accordance with best practice – appropriate DBS checks should be carried out on all staff and host families. These checks should be carried out prior to their appointment or prior to the start of their regulated unsupervised activities. If a new starter does commence employment prior to clearance being received, they must have signed a self-declaration and their access should be supervised at all times; they must not be left alone with children.)

12. Does a single, central record (SCR) exist of all checks on staff and, where appropriate, proprietor/ governors and volunteers?

13. Are references taken up on all staff prior to employment and recorded on the SCR?

14. Do all staff, volunteers and contractors undertake appropriate training on safeguarding which is recorded and monitored for currency? Is this training updated regularly in line with advice from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)?

15. For those working with regularly or hosting under 18s and vulnerable adults, does the training include how to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to disclosures from participants?

16. Is safeguarding training part of the induction training for all staff, temporary staff and volunteers newly appointed? Does this include the safeguarding policy, staff behaviour policy or code of conduct, and the identification and role of the designated safeguarding lead and how to recognise and respond to concerns?

17. Good practice is that all staff are trained to Level 1 (basic); management to Level 2 (advanced) and DSL to Level 3.

18. Is there a board level lead responsible for safeguarding? Is there a designated senior member of staff responsible for safeguarding arrangements, who has been trained to the appropriate level, (including Inter-agency working) and understands her/his responsibilities with respect to the protection and welfare of participants under 18 and vulnerable adults?

19. Is clear information provided to the parents/guardians of under 18s? Does the publicity or other information made available, before enrolment, give an accurate description of the level of care and support given to participants under 18, especially concerning any periods when participants are unsupervised as well as including sleeping arrangements when accommodated overnight or when at leisure?

20. Are there safe working arrangements for off-site activities, such as any social programme?

21. Are there effective arrangements are made to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism?

22. Is there an E-Safety policy, that references the staff code of conduct, participants' use of social media and devices on site such as mobile phones and cameras?

23. Do managers and staff take action immediately if there are concerns about any form of bullying including cyber-bullying or other online risks to the participants?

24. Are arrangements for accommodation, through home-stay, halls of residence or otherwise, appropriately managed with adequate safeguards and levels of supervision and registered in accordance with national requirements?

25. When the provider arranges host family accommodation for under 18s, are enhanced DBS and barred list checks made for all permanent residents who are aged 16 or older?

26. Where under 16s are accommodated, other than with their parents or guardians, for more than 28 days, has the local authority been alerted?

Useful websites for further information and guidance on safeguarding

The Children Act 2004:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/pdfs/ukpga_20040031_en.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 – refer to this document as a basis for good practice, although it is our understanding that it is not a legal requirement in the private sector:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1161273/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023_-_statutory_guidance_for_schools_and_colleges.pdf

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-safer-recruitment-in-education

Safeguarding:

www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation/information-centres/care-children

Prevent:

https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/information_for_providers_on_prevent_obligations_0.pdf#

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