



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM VISIT (College)

INSTITUTION: Oxford Media and Business School

ADDRESS: Southern House
1 Cambridge Terrace
Oxford
OX1 1RR

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mrs Andrea Freeman

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF VISIT: 2 March 2017

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 28 April 2017

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

St Aldates College was established in Oxford in the 1970s. It became part of the British Study Centres Group and changed its name, in 1999, to Oxford Media and Business School (OMBS/the School). In 2007, the School was purchased by two senior members of staff, who are the current Principal and the Bursar. OMBS has always been based in the St Aldates area of Oxford, originally in Rose Place and since then in two different premises in Cambridge Terrace, which is close to their landlord Christ Church College, Oxford. The current accommodation, which OMBS holds on a ten-year renewable lease taken out in 2014, consists of a second-floor suite in a modern building.

Previously OMBS provided several courses of varying lengths. It now concentrates solely on the three-term Executive Personal Assistant (PA) Diploma. The typical student age range is 18 to 23 and currently all students are female. Many students have chosen OMBS instead of going to university or have already graduated.

Although the courses are open to students from outside the United Kingdom (UK), OMBS concentrates on recruitment within the UK. The School can accommodate a maximum of 80 students. OMBS is currently at maximum recruitment and there is a waiting list for places.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The Executive PA Diploma course has been developed to meet current employment needs. It includes personal development and business awareness, as well as the skills and support for writing a curriculum vitae (CV), making job applications and career development. The priority for the School is to place students in career-related employment. Students undertaking the diploma course acquire a high shorthand speed. They are provided with up-to-date Information Technology (IT) tools and social media techniques, which are employed in marketing and communications skills training. Work placement is provided for each student. Visiting speakers from commerce and industry are routinely included in the course delivery.

The course content and its assessment are industry lead through close links with employers and agencies. It culminates in an internal Diploma, which is graded Pass, Merit, Distinction and Distinction with Honours.

Student recruitment is targeted at UK independent schools, although other applicants, after successful interview, are also enrolled. All students have a degree, A-Levels or equivalent. They are all interviewed by the Principal, often with their parents attending.

3. Inspection process

One inspector carried out the inspection over half a day. The accommodation was viewed and meetings were held with the Principal, Bursar and a group of eight students. Brief visits were made to four classes with four different teachers. Oral feedback was given to the Principal at the end of the visit.

4. Inspection history

Full inspection:	2 November 1999
Re-accreditation inspection:	18 March 2002
Interim visit:	2 February 2006
Re-accreditation inspection:	30 - 31 January 2007

Interim visit:	4 June 2008
Re-accreditation inspection:	19 - 20 January 2011
Interim visit:	23 April 2013
Supplementary inspection:	20 May 2014
Re-accreditation inspection:	11 February 2015

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

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

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

A specialist IT staff member and the registrar, who is also the PA to the Principal have been appointed since the last inspection.

2. Response to actions points in last report

There were no action points in the last report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

Website and prospectus update should be completed, to include only details of currently available course(s), accurate location of new premises, clarification of deposit payments required and more recent photograph of premises.

The current website only provides details of the Executive PA Diploma Course, which is the only course currently available. There is a link to the current prospectus. The details of the location of the School are clear and the information on the £100 registration fee is clarified. The photos relate only to the current premises.

Lateness criteria should be defined in staff and student handbooks.

It is stated in the attendance policy and procedure document that, if a student is late for a class, this will be recorded on the lateness register. This document is included on the School's shared network drive, which can be accessed by everyone. It is introduced during the first tutorial session and is required to be signed by students.

A brief student feedback form should be introduced at the end of the first half-term.

All students are seen on a one-to-one basis by their Group Tutor in tutorial sessions during the first half-term. After six weeks, there is a report, known as a testimonial, on each student where any problems can be identified. Students in all groups are discussed during staff meetings to ascertain any problems. This is more appropriate than a student feedback form.

Staff and tutors should be asked to update their CVs prior to annual review.

All CVs have been updated and are with the Principal.

The procedures for regular course review should be reviewed and formalised in writing.

Course review is now included in the Staff Handbook.

A professional development exercise sharing good practice in classroom observation should be arranged.

An inset day is arranged in the final term during work experience week. The Principal is arranging for an outside company to come and deliver a teaching styles workshop. Peer to peer observations will be taking place next term in each department.

The classroom observation form should be reviewed.

This has been done and is included in the Staff Handbook with the statement that teaching will be observed by the Principal once a year, unless a greater frequency is deemed necessary.

Fuller medical and impairment information should be elicited by asking students to complete a questionnaire on arrival.

A section has been added to the Student Information Sheet, which is completed during induction on the first day of the course, asking for this information. Medical information is added to the database and a report created for each group. First aiders and tutors are made aware of this confidential information in case of an emergency.

Fuller and clearer information should be provided on how to get advice and assistance in the event of a medical situation.

A sheet providing useful information on this aspect is given to each student on the first day. It is also displayed on the noticeboard in the student common room, included in the Student Handbook and is on the School's shared network drive.

All relevant information in handbooks should be consolidated, with common information sourced from a single origin.

All such information can be found on the shared network drive. All students have access to this material and it can be updated as necessary. This information will be introduced to students during tutorial sessions. Staff information is also available on the School's information system.

The grievance procedure for students should be revised to produce a comprehensive complaints policy for students and other stakeholders, with inclusion of a stage for submission of a complaint in writing and reference to BAC's complaints procedure.

This is now included in the Policies for Students document and reference is made to BAC's complaints procedure.

Professional advice should be sought about detection and control of potential fire risk in the IT server cupboard.

This has been investigated and completed.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Senior management by the owners is hands on and very effective. Management system elements are comprehensive and provide the necessary information for effective management of the School.				

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments The teaching seen was judged to be well prepared and effective. It was delivered by knowledgeable staff to interested and participative students. Assessment was appropriate.				

4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Students stated that they were well cared for and evidence seen indicated a high level of support and satisfaction. Accommodation in high quality rented houses is provided for those students who require it. This is a very good feature of the School and highly praised by the students. It is managed very effectively by the Bursar.				

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments The accommodation, resources and facilities are of a very high standard and provide an excellent learning environment for students and staff.				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS
A well-run organisation providing, in a very good environment, training related to the requirements of employers.
Students are very well supported and encouraged to value the course, enjoy their time in Oxford and proceed to a career.
The success of OMBS is exceptional, it has a full complement of students and a waiting list.
Recruitment is often through recommendation of past students.
Standards of achievement during the course are high and course content is relevant to the requirements of employers.
The level of employment after graduation is high and records are kept of students' employment and subsequent career paths.
Staff and management are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and approachable and there is a good work ethic on the part of both staff and students.

ACTIONS REQUIRED	Priority H/M/L
None.	

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT
None.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	
Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable	