



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM VISIT (Short Course Provider)

ORGANISATION: Academic Summer

ADDRESS: DLD College
199 Westminster Bridge Rd
London
SE1 7FX

HEAD OF ORGANISATION: Ms Helen Lami

Accreditation status: Accredited

Date of visit: 26 July 2016

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: 13 October 2016

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the organisation

Academic Summer is a for-profit company, registered in the UK in 2010. It delivers summer schools for British and international students from 7 years of age during their holidays. It uses premises and facilities rented from independent schools in the West Country, North West England and the London area. Academic Summer is owned by two directors. One of the directors, who serves as Chief Executive, is supported by a Principal.

Recruitment is managed by the Director, who briefs agents in a wide range of countries. Most students return to their own countries after their courses but about 10 per cent progress to boarding school education in the United Kingdom (UK).

2. Brief description of the current provision

Most students attending the courses aim to improve their knowledge of English in context, whilst developing their chosen subject skills. Teaching, therefore, centres on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), which is a recognised approach to language learning offered and promoted by Academic Summer. Separate courses, across a very wide range of subjects, are organised for Academic Juniors (7-12 years), Academic Summer (13-18 years) and also for Academic Adults.

There is an emphasis on flexibility with short study blocks of 75 minutes up to full-time studies over eight weeks, following which, students can move from one course to another.

Both homestay and fully residential accommodation are arranged, together with transportation support, study, leisure visits and access to sports facilities.

In 2016, Academic Summer courses are held in Sidcot in Bristol and at a new central London venue. There are currently 212 enrolments.

3. Inspection visit process

One inspector visited the central London venue for half a day and met with the two owner-directors, the Principal and, briefly, with tutors delivering classes and reception staff. A tour was made of the premises, including classrooms and laboratories, break-out spaces and a spacious dining hall. This inspection report is in relation to the provider's provision in the United Kingdom only.

4. Inspection history

Inspection, Stage 2: 21 January 2010

Inspection, Stage 3: 27-28 July 2010

Interim: 1 August 2011

Reaccreditation: 5 and 30 July 2013

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector(s) during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

Courses are being held in the central London accommodation for the first time in 2016. The accommodation is spacious, with common spaces that can rapidly be adapted for lecture use, social events or everyday relaxation areas. Beyond the securely monitored entrance, there is access to the teaching facilities, the dining room and several stories of residential accommodation. The premises include a well-appointed art room, science laboratories, music rooms equipped with both instruments and composition software, a drama studio with cyclorama (a large curtain or wall, often concave, positioned at the back of the apse) and a recording studio.

The provision of residential accommodation is arranged in partnership between DLD College and Urbanest Student Accommodation. In terms of student overnight stay and safeguarding, students under the age of 16 and 18 are accommodated on separate floors. The central London site occupies some 15 upper stories above the DLD College. It was reported that firm agreement has already been reached enabling Academic Summer to recruit for 2017.

There has been a change of management. At each site, a single centre director now takes overall responsibility for overseeing both the academic and pastoral components.

2. Response to actions points in last report

1.1 A single centre director, responsible for overseeing both the academic and pastoral components of the seniors' programme and staffing, would provide greater clarity and a single point of reference.

This policy has been adopted. At each site a single centre director takes overall responsibility for overseeing both the academic and pastoral components.

1.3 Regular staff meetings, even though timetabling, staff rotas and other duties would not enable all academic and pastoral staff to attend, should be introduced to improve communications between staff and facilitate informal feedback to management.

It was reported that teachers' meetings are held weekly and pastoral staff meetings are held regularly. Notes are circulated to staff who cannot attend and the SMT maintains oversight of issues arising.

5.1 The minimum English language requirements for Academic Summer students must be clearly stated on the website and in the brochure.

Academic Summer uses CEFR levels to specify minimum language levels.

7.4 An appropriate mechanism for reporting on Academic Summer's response to feedback to the students must be introduced.

Evidence was provided to show that student feedback is gathered as each summer school progresses. However, a feedback reporting mechanism, to the students, still needs to be implemented.

8.2 A formalised end-of-season report and action plan must be introduced.

This action has not been considered a priority as short course delivery, by its nature, requires day-to-day monitoring. The Principal, nevertheless, welcomed the requirement that Academic Summer should introduce an end-of-season review and action plan.

19.3 Participants must be advised of BAC's complaints procedure.

BAC's complaints procedure is included in Academic Summer's induction documentation.

Response to recommendations in last report

It would be helpful for teachers to have more information about students before they arrived: about individual students' backgrounds, future aims and their level of English.

The results of online tests can be accessed by teachers.

Academic Summer should ensure that agents marketing the courses have accurate information about the proportion of different language speakers in previous cohorts so that parents' and students' expectations are effectively managed.

The Director responsible for briefing agents is confident that agents are clear about Academic Summer's requirements and expectations.

Insert a question on the final feedback form 'Would you recommend this course to a friend?'

This has not yet been done.

Insert a space on student feedback forms for management to indicate that it has been read and whether any action should be taken.

This has not yet been done.

Alternative arrangements for cover should be in place, so that academic managers do not have to teach, especially at the start of courses when monitoring and supporting their teachers will be their principal duty.

It was reported that steps are taken to ensure that teachers responsible for academic management are experienced in the policies and procedures of Academic Summer.

At their induction, teachers who are less familiar with international students should be provided with some guidance on how to grade their language and techniques to check that all the class have understood.

Academic Summer uses CEFR levels to specify minimum language levels.

3. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

3.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be		✓		
Comments The Director confirmed that DBS requirements are met by new staff and that records are maintained. Most students enter on a Short Term Study Visa. Where students have been registered through a destination boarding school the boarding school ensures that the student arrives on a Tier 4 visa. Feedback forms do not include questions about whether the student would recommend the institution to				

others. There is no mechanism for reporting that the feedback has been read and whether any action has been taken as a result.

7.4 An appropriate mechanism for reporting on Academic Summer's response to feedback to the students must be introduced.

8.2 A formalised end-of-season report and action plan must be introduced.

3.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				
It was noted that Academic Summer makes extensive use of its intranet system to share information, feedback, best practice and action plans with all teachers.				

3.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				
A leisure programme, including access to sports facilities at South Bank University, is planned and managed.				

3.4 Premises and Facilities

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				
The teaching facilities visited by the inspector were both impressive and extensive. At the time of the visit, 64 students were being taught in nine classrooms, laboratories and studios, well below the limit of 15 students per class.				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Institution's strengths

The focus of Academic Summer schools is well-organised teaching, rather than a holiday opportunity.

Students receive a high standard of pastoral care and support, which is appropriate to their ages and backgrounds. There is very good supervision of students, on site and off.

The residential and home-stay accommodation provided is pleasant, appropriate and well monitored.

Leisure activities and excursions are selected to meet the interests and needs of the students and carefully managed to ensure their safety.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
7.4 An appropriate mechanism for reporting on Academic Summer's response to feedback to the students must be introduced.	M
8.2 A formalised end-of-season report and action plan must be introduced.	M

Recommendations
It is recommended to insert a question on the final feedback form 'Would you recommend this course to a friend?'
It is recommended to insert a space on student feedback forms for management to indicate that it has been read and whether any action should be taken.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable	