

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

Short Course Provider (SCP) Full Inspection

ORGANISATION: Ardmay House International Summer School (AHISS)

ADDRESS: Ardmay House
Arrochar
Argyll
G83 7AH

HEAD OF ORGANISATION: Miss Gail Ritchie (AHISS) Mr Andrew Ritchie (Ardmay Ltd)

DATE OF INSPECTION: 21-22 July 2016

ACCREDITATION STATUS AT INSPECTION: Unaccredited

DECISION ON ACCREDITATION:

- Accreditation awarded for the full four-year period.
- Decision on accreditation deferred.
- Award of accreditation refused.

Date: 9 Sep 2016

1. Background to the organisation

Ardmay House International Summer School (AHISS) was established by Ardmay Ltd. Ardmay Ltd is a family-owned business, which runs Ardmay House Outdoor Education Centre. Ardmay Ltd was established in 2002 and operates throughout the academic year mostly for school groups from the West of Scotland.

AHISS was launched in the summer of 2011 and is managed by two Centre Directors, a husband and wife team, who founded the School. Their daughter and son are also part of the management team, as Course Director and Operations Director respectively. The fifth member of the management team has the role of Operations Manager.

One Centre Director is responsible for strategic management, facilities, transport, general oversight of activities and operations. The second Centre Director is responsible for finance, administration, sales, marketing, safeguarding, welfare, housekeeping and catering management.

The Course Director is responsible for the work of the teaching team, which comprises of three English language teachers, and also takes a lead role in student welfare and course administration. When the summer school is not running, the Course Director is responsible for sales and marketing. The Operations Director supervises the instructor team and is responsible for activities and excursions.

2. Brief description of the current provision

AHISS was launched in 2011 and initially attracted 11 students from Spain. AHISS has enjoyed steady growth ever since and, by 2015, welcomed 139 students from 23 different countries. The current student intake for 2016 is 192 students.

Under the current programme provision, students, who are between 8 and 16 years of age, may either choose the Ardmay Adventure programme, participating in two activity sessions per day and with no English language classes or the Adventure English programme, offering 15 hours of English lessons per week, as well as a variety of outdoor adventure activities.

For the English lessons, there are 3 proficiency levels each, for younger and older students respectively. The outdoor activities include; climbing, abseiling, kayaking, canoeing, and gorge walking.

A range of evening activities is offered, including a talent competition, a pirate party and a Scottish traditional Gaelic social gathering (a ceilidh). There are also a wide range of excursions offered to museums, theme parks, a safari park, and science centres in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling and Loch Lomond.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted over two days by a single inspector. Meetings were held with the two Centre Directors as well as the Course Director, Operations Director, Operations Manager, Activity Coordinator, 3 Group Leaders, 3 teachers and a group of 8 students. Informal discussions were also held with a number of instructors.

Six English Language classes and orienteering and climbing activities were observed. The School's comprehensive range of policies and procedures and a new integrated database of student information were also reviewed. This inspection report is in relation to the provider's provision in the United Kingdom only.

PART B - JUDGEMENT 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.

INSPECTION AREA - MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

1. The provider is effectively managed

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

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

Comments

Roles and responsibilities are very clearly documented and there are clear communication channels between the staff. Prior to the commencement of the programme, all staff attended a three day induction programme.

Meetings occur regularly between the instructor team and the teaching team and weekly management meetings are held with notes of any action points circulated as appropriate.

All staff are clear about their tasks for the day and informed of any specific student issues.

2. The administration of the provider is effective

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 2.1 | Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced and understand their specific responsibilities and duties. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.2 | The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the provider. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.3 | The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.4 | Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the provider. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.5 | Data collection and collation systems are effective. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2.6 | Administrative offices are adequate in size and resources for the effective administration of the provider. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No |

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

Comments

All aspects of administration are efficient and well documented.

3. **The provider employs appropriate managerial and administrative staff**

- 3.1 There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment and continuing employment of suitably qualified and experienced staff. Yes No
- 3.2 Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment. Yes No
- 3.3 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff. Yes No

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

Comments

All the instructors are full time staff or freelance consultants who work with the provider for substantial periods during the year. Many were recruited through the trainee instructor programme. There are very thorough recruitment process for teachers.

The Course Director conducts classroom observations in the second week. Group leaders are generally students with experience of working with children and an interest in a related career.

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

- 4.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the provider's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered. Yes No
- 4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. Yes No

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

Comments

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

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

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

Comments

There are no strict language entry requirements, although information on language level is sought on the application form. Agents, who are visiting group leaders, are used and are responsible for about 30 per cent of enrolments.

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

- 6.1 There is a clear and published policy on participant attendance and punctuality. Yes No
- 6.2 Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all participants, collated centrally and reviewed. Yes No NA
- 6.3 Participant absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken. Yes No

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

Comments

Class registers for English classes and group lists for activities are maintained, the latter include photos and notes on any medical conditions. Incidents of sickness are identified by group leaders and are reported on the operations notice board.

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

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

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

Comments

In addition to the on-going informal feedback that is given on a daily basis, the School conducts a formal end-of-course evaluation survey with all students. The survey results revealed high levels of student satisfaction. Students are made aware of how the School has responded to the comments they have made.

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

- 8.1 There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the provider's performance. Yes No
- 8.2 Reports are compiled which present the results of the provider's reviews and incorporate action plans. Yes No
- 8.3 Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed. Yes No

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

Comments

The School monitors its own performance through feedback from students, visiting group leaders and staff. An annual review was produced, which summarised the School's reflection on its performance and led to a detailed action plan.

Future annual reviews should also include a summary of student feedback.

INSPECTION AREA - TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

9. Programme management is effective

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 9.1 | There is a suitably qualified and experienced programme manager or management team with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment and the management of the body of trainers. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> NA |
| 9.2 | Classes are timetabled and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> NA |
| 9.3 | The allocation of trainers to classes provides for a consistent learning experience and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> NA |
| 9.4 | There is an appropriate policy and effective procedures for the acquisition of teaching and learning resources. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> NA |

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

Comments

The Course Director is a qualified and experienced teacher who provides very good overall direction to the programme, with the support of the very close-knit management team. Teachers report that all resources requested are provided.

10. The courses are planned and delivered in ways that enable participants to succeed

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|------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 10.1 | Courses are designed and delivered in ways that allow participants to develop the knowledge and skills which will be required for final examinations or assessments or which meet stakeholders' requirements. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> NA |
| 10.2 | Lessons and assessments maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding body. | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input checked="" type="radio"/> NA |
| 10.3 | Formative assessments appropriately reflect the nature and standards of summative examinations. | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input checked="" type="radio"/> NA |
| 10.4 | Participants are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> NA |
| 10.5 | The academic backgrounds and particular needs of participants are taken into account in the classroom delivery of the course. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | |

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

Comments

Courses are designed to provide learning experiences that are both purposeful and fun. Teachers are responsive to the needs of individuals and active student participation is encouraged.

11. **Trainers are suitable for the courses to which they are allocated and effective in delivering them**

11.1 Trainers are appropriately qualified and experienced. Yes No

11.2 Trainers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communicative skill which allows them to deliver the content of courses effectively. Yes No

11.3 The appraisal procedures for trainers incorporate regular classroom observation. Yes No

11.4 Trainers are supported in their continuing professional development and enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the learning of participants. Yes No

11.5 Trainers respond to different learning needs of participants where appropriate, taking various learning styles into account in their planning and delivery of lessons. Yes No

11.6 Trainers employ effective strategies to involve all participants in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content. Yes No

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

Comments

All teachers and instructors are appropriately qualified and have relevant experience.

12. **The provider provides participants and trainers with access to appropriate resources and materials for study**

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

Comments

13. **Participants receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, which are effectively monitored**

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|------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 13.1 | Feedback is given to individual participants tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery. | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | |
| 13.2 | Courses are planned to include a schedule of assessments, the procedures and criteria for which are available in writing and in advance to participants and trainers. | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input checked="" type="radio"/> NA |
| 13.3 | Assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of participants who are not making satisfactory progress and prompt intervention where appropriate. | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input checked="" type="radio"/> NA |
| 13.4 | Participants are made aware of how their progress relates to their targeted level of achievement. | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input checked="" type="radio"/> NA |
| 13.5 | Additional support or advice on alternative courses is provided to participants who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed. | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input checked="" type="radio"/> NA |
| 13.6 | Participants have appropriate access to trainers outside class time. | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input checked="" type="radio"/> NA |

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

Comments

In all classes observed, teachers made helpful and encouraging comments to students on their performance.

14. **The provider offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies wherever appropriate**

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

Comments

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

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|------|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 15.1 | There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the NQF/QCF and evidence that participants who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level. | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> NA |
| 15.2 | There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study. | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> NA |
| 15.3 | External moderators are involved in the assessment process where appropriate. | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No | <input type="radio"/> NA |

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

Comments

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

- 16.1 The provider complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration where appropriate. Yes No NA
- 16.2 For internal assessments and awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration, and clear procedures for participants to appeal against their marks. Yes No NA

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

Comments _____

INSPECTION AREA - PARTICIPANT WELFARE

17. **Participants receive pastoral support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances**

- 17.1 There is at least one named staff member responsible for participant welfare who is suitably trained, accessible to all participants and available to provide advice. Yes No NA
- 17.2 Participants receive appropriate advice before the start of the programme. Yes No
- 17.3 Participants receive an appropriate induction and relevant information at the start of the programme. Yes No
- 17.4 Participants are issued with a contact number for out-of-hours and emergency support. Yes No NA
- 17.5 The provider has policies in place to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour. Yes No

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

Comments _____

The group leaders have day-to-day responsibility for student welfare. Training on their responsibilities is provided through a three and a half day induction programme. Overall responsibility for student welfare rests with the Course Director and one of the Centre Directors. Students and their parents receive detailed advice before travelling to the School. Students are able to use various on-line methods to contact their parents, which limits the need for the School to maintain on-going contact with parents.

18. **International participants are provided with specific advice and assistance**

- 18.1 International participants receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and staying in the UK. Yes No
- 18.2 International participants receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area. Yes No
- 18.3 Information and advice specific to international participants continues to be available throughout the course of study. Yes No
- 18.4 Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations. Where possible, participants have access to speakers of their own first language. Yes No

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

Comments _____

19. **The fair treatment of participants is ensured**

- 19.1 Participants apply for and are enrolled on courses under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions. Yes No
- 19.2 Participants have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course. Yes No

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

Comments _____

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

- 20.1 Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to the needs of participants. Yes No
- 20.2 Any residential accommodation is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, including Ofsted where participants under 18 are accommodated. Yes No NA
- 20.3 Clear rules and fire, health and safety procedures are in place, with appropriate precautions taken for security of participants and their property. Yes No
- 20.4 A level of supervision is provided appropriate to the needs of participants. Yes No
- 20.5 Separate accommodation blocks are provided for participants under 18. Yes No NA

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

Comments _____

Students are in bunk bedrooms, with separate corridors for girls and boys. Nighttime supervision is the responsibility of group leaders. The students liked the accommodation provided.

21. **Where home-stay accommodation is organised, the welfare of participants is ensured and the provider's relationship with hosts is properly managed**

- 21.1 Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation which both provides a safe and comfortable living environment for participants and is appropriately located for travel to the provider and back. Yes No
- 21.2 Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before participants are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the provider. Yes No
- 21.3 The provider has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision. Yes No
- 21.4 Appropriate advice and support is given to both hosts and participants before and during the placement. Yes No
- 21.5 Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for participant feedback and prompt action taken in the event of problems. Yes No

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

Comments

22. **The provider provides an appropriate social programme for participants and information on leisure activities in the area**

- 22.1 Participants are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation at events and other leisure activities which may be of interest. Yes No
- 22.2 The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of participants. Yes No NA
- 22.3 Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability by the majority of participants. Yes No NA
- 22.4 Any activities organised by the provider are supervised by a responsible representative with suitable qualifications and experience. Yes No NA

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

Comments

The social programme is wide-ranging and greatly enjoyed by the students.

INSPECTION AREA - PREMISES AND FACILITIES**23. The provider has secure possession of and access to its premises**

23.1 The provider has secure tenure on its premises. Yes No NA

23.2 Where required, the provider has access to suitable external premises for training purposes of a temporary or occasional nature. Yes No NA

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

Comments

24. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for participants and staff

24.1 Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured. Yes No

24.2 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness. Yes No

24.3 There are specific safety rules in areas of particular hazard (e.g. science laboratories), made readily available to participants, staff and visitors. Yes No NA

24.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to participants, staff and visitors. Yes No

24.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside of the premises and notice boards for the display of general information. Yes No

24.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of participants and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors. Yes No

24.7 There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness. Yes No

24.8 There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms. Yes No

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

Comments

Specific safety rules exist for outdoor activities. These are explained by Activity Leaders, who enforce them by observing students closely and issuing guidance as required.

25. **Training rooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered**

- 25.1 Training rooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation in size and number for the classes allocated to them. Yes No
- 25.2 Training rooms and any specialised learning areas (e.g. laboratories, workshops, studios) are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each course. Yes No NA
- 25.3 There are facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required on each course. Yes No NA

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

Comments

English language teaching is provided in three portacabins, which are adequate in size for the small classes run by the School.

26. **There are appropriate additional facilities for participants and staff**

- 26.1 Participants have access to sufficient space and suitable facilities for private study, including library and IT resources. Yes No NA
- 26.2 Trainers have access to sufficient personal space for preparing lessons, marking work and relaxation. Yes No NA
- 26.3 Participants and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink where appropriate. Yes No NA
- 26.4 Participants and staff have access to storage for personal possessions where appropriate. Yes No NA
- 26.5 There are individual offices or rooms in which trainers and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings. Yes No

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

Comments

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. Yes No

PART C - SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Numbering of action points aligns with that of the minimum standards

MANAGEMENT, STAFFING AND ADMINISTRATION

Provider's strengths

Strong family ethos.
Close-knit management team who work very well together.
Excellent communication with all staff.
Comprehensive range of well written policies.
Very efficient procedures and record keeping.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Provider's strengths

Sound planning of courses and activities.
Well-structured teaching and participative teaching that engaged the students.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

PARTICIPANT WELFARE

Provider's strengths

Caring ethos.
Strong emphasis on health and safety.
Excellent social programme.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

PREMISES AND FACILITIES

Provider's strengths

Stunning location on Loch Long.
Excellent facilities.

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The annual review report should include a summary of student feedback.

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COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

N/A
