



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM VISIT (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Lexical Lab

ADDRESS: 59 Seymour Road
Harringay
London
N8 0BJ

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr Hugh Dellar and Mr Andrew Walkley

DATE OF VISIT: 30 May 2018

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 19 July 2018

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Lexical Lab Limited (the Provider) is a private company, limited by shares. It provides training and consultancy services. The two owners, who established the Provider in 2017, are trainers and authors of English language training material and offer short courses in the teaching and assessing of English and in language development. Lexical Lab began offering courses in July 2017. The courses take place in hired classrooms at the Holloway Road campus of the London Metropolitan University.

The Provider aims to use the lexical approach as a method of teaching foreign languages. This method was first described by Michael Lewis in the early 1990s. The approach is based on the idea that an important part of learning a language consists of being able to understand and produce lexical phrases, which are chunks of text through which students can perceive patterns of grammar and, more importantly, use vocabulary in a meaningful way.

As authors and trainers, Lexical Labs' owners have been strongly influenced by lexical approaches to language teaching which led them to write a methodology book, called Teaching Lexically. This explores lexis at various levels and underpins their English language courses designed particularly to train foreign teachers of English to develop skills they can use to help their students.

The owners manage the administration and the marketing. They have written the course materials, prepared the lessons and undertake most teaching and all administration. A visiting guest lecturer contributes towards the teaching of assessment methods on one short course.

2. Brief description of the current provision

BAC's accreditation applies only to the six-week summer schools, which run in London from early July each year. The Provider currently offers six such courses designed for teachers and learners of English.

The courses are Teaching Lexically, which is focused on the Provider's particular approach to teaching English; Advanced Language and Culture, aimed at developing teachers' and learners' familiarity with current issues; key cultural and political figures and events in Britain; English Boost, which is focused on enhancing speaking skills for teachers and learners; Better Testing and Assessment, focused on the role of assessment in the teaching of English; Developing Materials, to support the teaching of English and, finally, Basic English for Educators, an intensive English language course.

All these courses have participants enrolled for the six weeks beginning in July 2018 with similar plans in place for future years. Teaching Lexically and Advanced Language and Culture, both of ten days' duration as in 2017, are the most subscribed courses with 24 learners already enrolled for 2018. This is an increase of a third in numbers from 2017. All participants are over the age of 18, mostly teachers and all but two are female. In 2017 participants were from Central and Eastern Europe, Japan and Brazil and a similar profile applies to 2018.

No courses have been run in the United Kingdom since the last inspection, and there was no course running at the time of the current inspection.

3. Inspection visit process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over half a day. The inspection included meeting the two owners, who are also the managers and principal teachers, scrutinising documentation and a brief visit to the recently contracted participant residential accommodation in Wood Green. The owners co-operated very well with the inspection and the information required was clearly presented, principally online.

4. Inspection history

Full inspection: 5-6 July 2017

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgments 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

Since the last inspection, the Provider has directly reserved participant accommodation places in a hall of residence in Wood Green, five minutes away by car from the registered office. This was necessary because of participant feedback on the prohibitive cost of the existing accommodation. The managers have found a local dedicated student residence run, at a more reasonable rate, by a registered charity providing accommodation for university students.

2. Response to action points in last report

There were no action points in the last report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider is recommended to consider the introduction of lesson observations in order to ensure the high quality of the course delivery.

Rigorous and developmental formal lesson observations have been introduced. Written feedback, which clearly identifies strengths and possible areas of development such as sessions being more interactive, is provided to tutors. The owners, as principal course tutors, plan this summer to build in more interaction to their courses and to carry out further observations of each other's teaching.

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 | | | | |
| The fact that the two owners work closely together in terms of the oversight, management and teaching at the Provider has a positive impact on the course outcomes as indicated by participants' feedback. | | | | |
| The effective electronic administrative system clearly impacts well on administration, as the owners make effective use of cloud-stored documents to share information. | | | | |
| Minutes of fortnightly meetings held by the owners since the last inspection are developmental and comprehensive. | | | | |
| The updated participant handbook incorporates revised terms and conditions and a fair and transparent refund policy. | | | | |

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

| | Met | Partially met | Not met | |
|--|-----|---------------|---------|--|
| The standards are judged to be | ✓ | | | |
| Comments | | | | |
| <p>The excellent course materials impact well on the quality of the learning, as evidenced in participant feedback.</p> <p>Several well-presented text books that are used as learning resources are up-to-date, colourfully printed with excellent illustrations and contextualised examples.</p> <p>Attendance is effectively monitored. As a result, attendance rates are high.</p> | | | | |

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

| | Met | Partially met | Not met | |
|---|-----|---------------|---------|--|
| The standards are judged to be | ✓ | | | |
| Comments | | | | |
| <p>Participants' feedback shows high levels of participant satisfaction with the support provided, including that provided in the accommodation and homestays that the owners recommended. There is no specific feedback on the programme of social events, including the visits and walks.</p> <p>The participant accommodation is fit for purpose with regard to health and safety, facilities and comfort.</p> | | | | |

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

| | Met | Partially met | Not met | |
|---|-----|---------------|---------|--|
| The standards are judged to be | ✓ | | | |
| Comments | | | | |
| <p>The classrooms to be used in July 2018 at the London Metropolitan University are well-lit and ventilated with up-to-date technology resources.</p> | | | | |

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

| STRENGTHS |
|--|
| <p>The managers are very experienced English language teachers and published authors of popular language textbooks.</p> <p>Effective electronic systems ensure the efficient administration of courses and communication with participants.</p> <p>The training rooms used and the residential accommodation meet the needs of the participants well.</p> <p>The social and cultural programme is well-researched and implemented and has a good impact on participants' enjoyment of the courses.</p> |

| ACTIONS REQUIRED | Priority H/M/L |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| None | |

| RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT |
|--|
| <p>The Provider is recommended to structure written participant feedback to include planned social events, including visits and walks.</p> |

| COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS | |
|---|------------|
| Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated. | YES |