



## **BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT**

### **INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)**

**PROVIDER:** Oxford Study Courses

**ADDRESS:** Belsyre Court  
57 Woodstock Road  
Oxford  
OX2 6HJ

**HEAD OF PROVIDER:** Dr Kim Polgreen

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Accredited

**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 30 July 2019

**ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:** 28 November 2019

## **PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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### **1. Background to the provider**

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Oxford Study Courses (OSC/the Provider) was established in 1990 as a family run business. The present Chief Executive Officer is the daughter of the founder. It is registered as a limited company. In 2007, it was sold to Pamoja Capital which is an investment provider. In 2015, Global Education Management Systems (GEMS) Education made a significant investment in OSC, while Pamoja Capital retained a minority share and representation on the Board.

OSC operates as an independent organisation, which is dedicated to supporting the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum, IB schools and IB students. Its mission is to provide the highest quality educational support for IB students and schools, to support philanthropic educational projects and to nurture a fulfilling working environment in which all stakeholders are treated with integrity and respect.

The OSC headquarters and administration office, where 32 permanent staff are based, is in leased accommodation in central Oxford. Courses are delivered at Oxford and Cambridge University colleges.

### **2. Brief description of the current provision**

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OSC provides academic support courses for participants who are taking the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) at their different schools. Most participants study on a residential basis. Their courses are offered in the spring and summer school vacations. The spring revision course is held in Oxford, where participants are resident and taught in Oxford University colleges. Summer courses are held from July to August in both Oxford and Cambridge universities.

All OSC classes are delivered face-to-face. Most tutors are employed as teachers in their own IB schools and/or are IB examiners or principal examiners for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). A minority have written textbooks for IBDP and study guides for OSC. All the tutors are self-employed and many choose to return to work with OSC year after year.

OSC courses are normally offered over a three-week period in the spring to a six-week period in the summer. The majority of participants attend the spring revision course for about five to eight days. Most of those attending the summer course do so for two to three weeks. As part of the 2019 spring revision course, OSC provided more than 160 classes across 40 different subjects. During the summer of 2019, OSC provided 159 classes in 41 subjects. The majority of classes were for those, who were half-way through their IB programme. Class sizes are capped at 10 to 15 participants depending on the course and subject being taught. The material covered in the OSC courses is wholly within the IBDP syllabus for that subject and directly supports the learning the students are already doing in their regular IB school.

During the summer 2018 and spring 2019 courses, the majority of participants were from Germany. The total number of participants was 1108, of whom there were approximately equal numbers of males and females. The total number of participants enrolled at the time of the inspection was 68. All participants are aged from 14 to 18.

### **3. Inspection process**

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The inspection was undertaken by one inspector over one day in Oxford. The inspector had discussions with the Head of Operations Manager and Designated Safeguarding Officer. The inspector also met the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Director of Studies, the Course Director, tutors and deans. A meeting was also held with participants. The inspector observed two classes and toured the headquarters and the Oxford University college where the Oxford courses take place. The inspector also scrutinised various documentation. All staff made themselves readily available and co-operated well with the inspection.

**4. Inspection History:**

<b>Inspection Type</b>	<b>Date</b>
Stage 2	22 January 2009
Stage 3	6 April 2009
Interim	21 January 2010
Re-accreditation	3 & 10 April 2013
Interim	10 July 2015
Re-accreditation	11 & 13 July 2017

## **PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE**

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*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**

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There have been no significant changes since the last inspection. However, over the next few months, OSC will be moving to new premises outside Oxford and the existing CEO will be leaving the Provider.

### **2. Response to actions points in last report**

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There were no action points from the last inspection.

### **3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report**

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*OSC should continue to review their application process to ensure that participants are better able to select more appropriate subjects and course dates.*

OSC have reviewed their application procedure to ensure that participants are better able to select more appropriate subjects and course dates. However, this is subject to a minimum number of participants for each course to make the courses cost effective.

*OSC should pursue their review of how they capture participant feedback so that they carry this out in a comprehensive and representative form.*

OSC have reviewed how they capture participant feedback. The number of times they ask for formal feedback has been reduced following comments from participants that they were often providing repetitive information. The Provider has now made the feedback more focussed at the end of each course.

*OSC should pursue their stated intention to further develop additional opportunities for class observations.*

OSC have developed additional opportunities for class observations. The head of curriculum visits all classes during the summer courses and carries out a representative sample in the spring. This will be further developed in the future by carrying out learning walks where all classes are visited by a senior member of staff.

*OSC is recommended to continue to investigate how they might encourage more participants to use OSC resources to provide impartial advice and help outside of the course periods.*

OSC have investigated how they might encourage more participants to use OSC resources outside the course periods. Participants are contacted by e-mails and telephone calls to encourage them to use the resources that are available to them and that will help them in their studies when they return to their school.

### **4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements**

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#### **4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)**

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met     Partially Met     Not Met

**Comments**

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OSC continues to be well managed. The management structure is clearly defined with all the permanent and temporary staff understanding who they report to and their place within the structure. High levels of permanent staff retention and the return of experienced temporary staff for the duration of the courses have resulted in the development of much expertise within the organization.

All the publicity materials are well produced and accurately reflect the nature of the courses on offer.

Care is taken to recruit appropriate participants for the courses and participants confirmed that the courses are suitable for their needs.

New software has been purchased to ensure that attendance and participant progress are effectively monitored and all activities that individual participants engage in are accurately recorded in a timely manner. Tutors and/or course directors record the participants' attendance at all classes electronically within ten minutes of the start of each class. The resulting data is monitored centrally so that immediate, appropriate and progressive action can be taken in the case of non-attendance.

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#### 4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

The trainers are experienced practicing teachers who are also IB examiners and authors of IB textbooks. As a result, they deliver sessions to meet the participants' needs and goals.

The trainers deliver appropriate and stretching lessons. They support the learning of the participants by communicating their own enthusiasm for their subject and the process of learning. Classes are well planned and structured.

There are daily progress tests and participants confirmed that they are able to discuss their progress with trainers outside lessons. As a result, the participants know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

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#### 4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**  Met  Partially Met  Not Met

**Comments**

Participants receive appropriate advice and guidance before and during the course. Participants say that they feel safe and well supported on the course.

Effective arrangements are in place to ensure the safety of the participants. The safeguarding responsibility is shared between the CEO and the general manager who have both received appropriate training. This ensures that there is appropriate support at all the venues used by OSC. Trainers are given refresher training and all staff who are in contact with the participants receive have been trained in safeguarding. All trainers and relevant staff have undergone Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, which are appropriately recorded. All temporary staff, who are in contact with participants, have also undergone appropriate checks.

The Provider makes use of a meet and greet service at all the airports at which participants arrive to ensure that participants, parents and guardians arrive safely at the venues.

Participants are issued with a card which contains contact details, including a 24-hour contact telephone number in case of emergency. Participants are required to carry this with them at all times. This

information is clearly displayed on-site and in the designated participant areas. As a result, participants feel safe and secure.

Effective arrangements are in place to protect participants from risks associated with radicalisation and extremism and these are clearly stated in the safeguarding policy.

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#### 4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

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**The standards are judged to be:**

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

**Comments**

OSC is moving to a three-year rolling booking programme with their selected university colleges to ensure continuity and security of accommodation.

Administration and head office accommodation is spacious, well equipped and fit for purpose.

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#### 4.5 Compliance Declaration

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**Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.**

Yes

No

**PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS**

**STRENGTHS**

The full-time managers and administrators and the use of temporary staff who regularly return to work on the OSC courses ensure that there is a well qualified and highly experienced team who enthusiastically support both the trainers and participants.

The use of subject expert trainers with long experience of the IB, many of whom return year after year, ensures an excellent learning experience for participants.

Facilities in the Oxford college are outstanding and participants enjoy being there.

**ACTIONS REQUIRED**

None

High     Medium     Low

**RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)***

None

**COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE**