

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM VISIT AND SUPPLEMENTARY INSPECTION CHANGE OF MANAGEMENT/STAFFING (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC)

ADDRESS: Oxbridge Court
Osney Mead
Oxford
OX1 0ES

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Mr James Emerson

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 19 November 2019

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 20 February 2020

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

The International Non-Governmental Organisation Training and Research Centre (INTRAC/the Provider) was established in 1991 and is a limited company and registered charity. It is governed by a volunteer Board of Trustees.

INTRAC's training includes tailor-made in-house programmes, scheduled face-to-face short courses in Oxford, as well as online training courses. The scheduled courses cover project monitoring and evaluation, advocacy, strategy and influencing skills, gender analysis and planning and theory of change for planning and impact assessment.

The aims of INTRAC continue to be to alleviate poverty and to strengthen civil society. It seeks to do this by providing training, consultancy and research services to organisations involved in international development and relief. Examples of such organisations are the Red Cross, Oxfam and Amnesty International and nationally based Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Its main goals include the desire to improve NGO performance by exploring policy issues and by strengthening management and organisational effectiveness.

The current Executive Director joined INTRAC on 1 October 2019. The Executive Director heads up a senior management team. The members of the team are the Research, Learning and Communications Director, the Business Development Manager and the Finance and Administration Director.

The head office of INTRAC is in Oxford, where all administration takes place. The INTRAC open training courses are delivered at a hotel in Oxford, where residential accommodation is also provided.

A recent strategic priority of INTRAC has been to grow the portfolio of online courses, as this method of delivery enables people from a wider range of organisations to participate. Under this initiative, all introductory level courses have been transferred to online delivery, with advanced level courses delivered face-to-face in Oxford.

BAC accreditation is for the face-to-face short course provision in the United Kingdom (UK) only.

2. Brief description of the current provision

INTRAC offers a range of Oxford-based open training courses annually on a range of themes related to its expertise in in-country research and consultancy on international development. The topics are Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation, Advocacy Strategy and Influencing Skills, Gender Analysis and Planning and Theory of Change for Planning and Impact Assessment.

Courses are mainly run at an advanced level, for practitioners with significant professional experience. Any related introductory courses are delivered online.

All courses are short, of three to five days' duration, and aimed at improving professional competence. None of these courses are externally certificated although certificates of attendance are given to all clients. None of the courses are accredited by national awarding bodies or formally assessed through examinations or in-house course assessments. Most courses have between 10 and 14 participants and the maximum target is 16.

Over half of the course participants usually work in the not-for-profit sector such as international or national NGOs and civil society organisations, with the remaining working for governments, intergovernmental bodies, research institutions, consulting firms or as independent consultants. In 2018 to 2019, 76 people participated in INTRAC's full-time face-to-face courses in Oxford. Of these, approximately half were based in the United Kingdom (UK) or elsewhere in the European Union (EU) and the rest were from countries outside the EU such as Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Ghana, Liberia, Nepal, Norway, Turkey and Uganda.

At the time of the inspection, there were 17 participants on a five-day Advanced Monitoring and Evaluation course. All were over the age of 18 and the majority were female. Four participants were attending from the UK, three from elsewhere in the European Union and the remainder from countries across Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and South-East Asia.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was conducted by a single inspector over a day at the provider's office in Oxford. Meetings were held with the Chief Executive, the Principal Consultant with strategic oversight for training, members of the training team and the Director of Finance and Administration. Staff and participant records were spot checked, and relevant operational and participant information documents reviewed. The Provider engaged fully with the planning of the inspection and staff were helpful and open during the inspection itself.

4. Background to the supplementary inspection

This inspection was scheduled because of staff changes relating to a number of senior and middle-rank posts. Key changes were in the appointment of a new Chief Executive, from 1 October 2019, the departure of the Director of Training and Consultancies, in August 2019, and her replacement by an interim appointee and several changes of personnel within the training team.

5. Inspection history

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	19-20 October 2010
Supplementary	24 June 2011
Interim	30 January 2012
Re-accreditation	24-25 November 2014
Interim	8 September 2016
Re-accreditation	13 & 19 November 2018

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

There have been a number of changes of staff within INTRAC since the last inspection. The Chief Executive Officer left at the end of September 2019, and has been replaced by a new appointee, who knows the organisation well and has been working in development globally for many years. There was a short handover, and the new appointee is currently working through a structured process of meeting all staff. This approach has ensured a smooth transition period.

The Director of Consultancy and Training left at the end of August 2019. An interim arrangement has been made, with one of INTRAC's former Programme Directors taking over the key responsibilities of this role, pending a review of the Directorship by the Chief Executive. When this is complete, a possibly reconfigured post will be advertised externally and an open recruitment process undertaken.

A new Training Manager is also in post, with an internal promotion having been made following a full recruitment process.

A communications post, which had been held vacant during a period of economies within the organisation, has recently been reviewed. Its focus has been shifted, to include an increased emphasis on digital marketing and the post advertised and filled in April 2019.

At the time of the inspection, a course was being run at an Oxford venue that the Provider has used in the past. This is a trial, to assess whether courses should return there more permanently, now it is under new management. This change is being considered mainly because participants have fed back that they consider the location of the alternative venue too far from the centre of Oxford.

2. Response to actions points in last report

11.3 The Provider must implement a process for conducting and recording the outcomes of observations of course sessions for staff trainers.

A detailed pro-forma has been developed for use in teaching observations. These are conducted by the Training Manager, who then discusses her observations with the trainer as part of the end of course review and feedback process. This provides an opportunity to identify modifications and improvements that will be made before the next delivery of the course concerned. Records of teaching observations are retained confidentially.

17.5 The Provider must put policies in place to avoid discrimination and have a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour, consistent with its code of ethics, which is effectively communicated to the participants.

A Learner's Code of Conduct (LCC) has been drawn up by the Provider. This is given to participants during their induction, with key points concerning respecting fellow participants highlighted. The LCC covers discrimination and abuse. Expected codes of behaviour are supported with clear and appropriate grievance procedures, should any concerns arise.

17.7 The Provider must have effective arrangements in place to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism and communicate these to participants and staff.

The LCC also covers risks of radicalisation and extremism. The Provider assesses the risks to be low, given the nature of its participants and length of programmes offered. Information on the expectations of students

covered in the LCC is provided to trainers and they are advised of steps to take to alert INTRAC's training team if any issues arise, including concerns in relation to radicalisation and extremism.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

To ensure that back up for trainers is available from office staff in the case of any emergency, it is recommended that the out of hours contact number should be formally supplied to trainers.

An out of hours contact number is displayed clearly in the training room and is readily accessible to trainers and participants. The attention of participants is drawn to this during the initial welcome session.

The Provider is recommended to consider ways of establishing more structured and appropriate opportunities to gain input from the informal network of regular consultants.

The Provider is aware of the value of dialogue with its consultants. As part of his induction meetings and subsequent planning, the Chief Executive is considering how most appropriately to develop more structured channels of communication with consultants, such as webinars, in addition to the current quarterly e-newsletters.

The Provider should consider offering appropriate professional development opportunities for trainers in order to increase the range of pedagogic skills used during the delivery of the courses.

A pilot of an online programme has been run for staff and freelance trainers focusing on pedagogic approaches to e-learning for adult learners. Similar programmes will be run in the future, to provide trainers with opportunities to keep in touch with current thinking on good practice and practical approaches to working with adult learners.

INTRAC should consider including information for participants on public transport to and from the training venues and central Oxford.

Additional information on activities and transport in and around Oxford is now included in the arrival information given to participants.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (supplementary inspection)

The numbers below refer to the standards as presented in the short course provider scheme document and main full inspection report

1. The provider is effectively managed

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|-----|---|---|-----------------------------|
| 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="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> 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="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> 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="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Trustees engage actively with questions of strategy, financial planning and risk management. The trustees meet quarterly, and are joined by the Chief Executive, Business Development Manager and Research, Learning and Communications Director.

The new Chief Executive has significant relevant prior experience and was appointed after a robust process of application and interviews, conducted by Trustees. He works collaboratively and values the perspectives of his staff.

Staff share information on their activities at weekly informal open meetings, and the Chief Executive has one-to-one meetings with all direct line reports weekly. The senior management team meets fortnightly. This structure of meetings is designed to create a climate in which potential issues can be raised before they escalate into serious problems, and so be addressed at an early stage, and supports the effective ongoing management of provision.

Members of the training team attend the training venue at key points in the course and can be contacted by telephone at other times. A general number is displayed in the training room, to be used by trainers or participants, and trainers also have the Training Manager's mobile telephone number.

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="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> 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="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.3	The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.4	Policies, procedures and systems are well documented and effectively disseminated across the provider.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2.5	Data collection and collation systems are effective.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Administrative members of the training team are appointed based on their prior relevant experience and qualifications and work to clear job descriptions. When a vacancy occurs, the job description is reviewed to ensure it reflects current needs, before the recruitment process begins. The members of this small team work highly collaboratively, focusing their time and resources on shared priorities as necessary to ensure the effective administration of provision for participants, in support of trainers.

Administrative processes and policies are well-structured and understood by staff. Those relating to the organisation and delivery of a course are recorded in a training manual, which is updated as necessary.

Records are well structured and contain core information only, making it easy to retrieve key data for use in the administration of courses and for management planning and review purposes. A shared drive enables members of the training team to share and pick up work as appropriate, increasing efficiency.

There is potential to streamline some processes, and reduce manual re-entry of data, through implementation of practices such as the collection of applicants' data directly. This would remove a routine administrative task from the workload of the Training Team and prevent the risk of introducing typographic errors.

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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
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|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 3.2 | Experience and qualifications claimed are verified before employment. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3.3 | There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of staff. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

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

Comments

Effective staff recruitment is conducted after a review of the job description, to ensure that it reflects the current needs and priorities of the organisation. Vacancies are advertised openly, with shortlisting and interviewing carried out by a group of staff. This process has recently been used to fill several vacancies, with some resulting in promotion for existing staff and others bringing in employees new to INTRAC.

References and qualifications are checked before appointment, with records of documentation retained confidentially.

Performance review processes are designed to encourage and support personal development with records of interviews and outcomes retained, so that they can be revisited to ensure agreed actions do take place.

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

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|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 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. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4.2 | Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

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

Comments

With the filling of a communications post that had previously been held vacant for some months, the training team has been able to review and improve its online information for applicants, including considerations of user journeys through the website to look for particular pieces of information.

This inhouse expertise has also supported enhanced social media participant recruitment campaigns.

The presentation and clarity of course materials given to participants have been reviewed and improvements made in terms of both structure and content.

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

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| 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. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 5.2 | A formal application process ensures that participants meet the entry requirements and any claimed qualifications are verified. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> 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. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> NA |
| 5.4 | Any overseas recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA |

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

Comments

There are no set levels of academic qualification required to participate in INTRAC's programmes. However, training programmes are designed for practicing professionals, including opportunities to consider work-based practices and case studies, so employment history and motivation for programmes are reviewed during the application process.

Inquiries and applications are responded to in a timely fashion, with English language skills assessed through the completed applications and further communications with applicants.

Participants are sent pre-arrival information about two weeks before their course starts, including practical details and information on any work that they will be doing on case studies they wish to bring.

Recruitment agents are not used.

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

6.1	There is an appropriate, clear and published policy on participant attendance and punctuality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
6.2	Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all participants, collated centrally and reviewed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
6.3	Participant absences are followed up promptly and appropriate action taken.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NA

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

Comments

Participants are adult professionals. They are notified orally during induction and in their handbook that full attendance is required to obtain a certificate of completion of the course. Should illness, or other serious issues, prevent an individual from attending a session, they must let the trainer or training team know. Given the small group sizes, the trainer checks numbers at each session visually.

Clear procedures are in place for following up on any unexplained absence. The trainer would try and ascertain the reason for absence, and alert the training team, through the mobile telephone number provided, so INTRAC's office staff could make contact with the individual concerned and establish the circumstances. In practice, this rarely happens.

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.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7.2	Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7.3	The feedback is reviewed by management and action is taken where necessary.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
7.4	There is a mechanism for reporting on the provider's response to the feedback to the participant body.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA

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

Comments

Participants are actively encouraged by trainers to give informal feedback at key points during a course and are asked to complete a written feedback form at the end of their stay in Oxford, with the explanation that this will be used as part of the programme review to inform any revisions. This feedback is reviewed

and analysed by the Training Manager, who discusses it with the trainer and uses it to inform future course planning. It is also incorporated into the process by which the Training Manager prepares an annual training plan, for approval by SMT as part of the organisation's annual planning processes.

Given the short nature of the courses offered, with participants attending for a maximum of five days, it is not appropriate to collect formal feedback until the end of the course. Therefore, there is not an opportunity to provide direct information on responses to participants. However, the informal feedback that is collected during course delivery, is used by trainers to inform modifications that they may then make to subsequent sessions.

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

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|-----|--|---|-----------------------------|
| 8.1 | There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the provider's performance. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8.2 | Reports are compiled which present the results of the provider's reviews and incorporate action plans. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 8.3 | Action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

This standard is judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

The Provider has effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuing improvement. The Training Manager holds a post-course review with the trainer, to discuss all aspects of the programme and identify successful aspects and those where improvements might be made.

The Provider has a structured annual planning process that covers all its activities. This includes consideration of a training plan for the coming year, proposed by the Training Manager based on evidence, including participant and trainer feedback, from the previous year's courses. The resulting agreed annual plan is monitored and reviewed by the Executive Director and the senior management team at their regular meetings.

Members of the senior management team intend to review the performance measures that they consider regularly in their meetings to ensure that these are well-aligned with the organisation's objectives.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Programme content is informed by INTRAC's work on development programmes in-country and resources are drawn from case studies based on this experience. Trainers are also active consultants with current relevant experience. Courses are therefore informed by an understanding of the issues that participants are likely to encounter in their work, increasing the relevance of the content and its delivery. Feedback is collected from participants and reviewed with trainers, to identify areas for the potential future enhancement of programmes.

The Provider is increasingly moving its introductory level programmes to online delivery and has recently appointed a Training and E-learning Officer to manage delivery of these courses, working with content provided by trainers. In June, INTRAC ran an online programme for its staff and freelance trainers to increase their knowledge of pedagogic approaches to e-learning for adult learners. It plans to run similar programmes in the future, to ensure good practice in the delivery of online programmes.

The course was also an opportunity for participants to explore good practice in teaching and learning more generally, as part of their development and trainers can now access materials that were used online, should they wish to review anything covered. The Training Manager plans to bring in associates to shadow online courses in the future, so that they can gain the necessary experience to facilitate these.

Courses use case studies from research and consultancy conducted elsewhere in INTRAC, ensuring content is based on recent and relevant examples are available to support trainers and participants.

Trainers are experienced consultants, who draw on their professional experience during course delivery.

The Training Manager conducts observations of some sessions and reviews all participant feedback. She then discusses these with the trainer, as part of the post-course review, to identify strengths and areas for future personal development, as well as possible modifications to the programme itself.

Trainers work closely with participants, in small groups, providing feedback on case studies presented. They stay in the same accommodation as the participants and are available outside class times, to discuss individual queries as necessary.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Participants are adult professionals. They regularly represent a broad range of cultural and religious backgrounds and course structure and facilities are planned with this in mind.

INTRAC provides appropriate pre-arrival advice and a short induction session at the start of each programme. Written information, including the recently introduced LCC, covers key points in relation to accommodation, course structure and learner support appropriate to the maturity of participants. This includes information about complaints procedures, social activities and local travel that participants may wish to arrange.

The INTRAC Training Team is available on call to provide support to participants and the trainer, should any issue arise.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Office accommodation is fit for purpose. The mid-way optional break point in the lease comes at the end of 2020 and the organisation plans to review its space use, including patterns of part-time and remote working, to consider whether it should reconfigure its space for these uses.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

INTRAC has a well-established process for strategic planning, drawing on critical evaluation of its activities and feedback received.

The Provider takes a positive approach to development and draws up realistic and appropriate plans for implementation of changes.

A practical schedule of formal and informal meetings is used to encourage dialogue and information-sharing within the provider.

The recently introduced Learner’s Code of Conduct provides clear guidance on expected behaviours and complaints procedures.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
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RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT *(to be reviewed at the next inspection)*

The Provider is recommended to develop methods of communication with its network of external stakeholders and customers that will encourage dialogue and feedback. This will assist it in developing provision that most closely reflects their needs and interests.

It is recommended that a number of administrative processes be simplified and rationalised with the introduction of additional Information Technology (IT) systems, for example to reduce unnecessary manual re-entry of information.

The Provider should, in parallel with a review of IT systems used to support administration, review the Management Information that is routinely produced for senior managers to support the generation of Key Performance Indicators.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

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