

BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER:	Oxford EMI Limited
ADDRESS:	72 Harpes Road Oxford OX1 3BH
HEAD OF PROVIDER:	Mrs Julie Dearden
ACCREDITATION STATUS:	Accredited
DATE OF INSPECTION:	21 November 2019
ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE:	Continued accreditation 20 February 2020

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Oxford EMI Limited (the Provider) is a privately owned training company. Oxford EMI was originally registered in March 2017 as EMI Training. The change to its current name took place on 5 September 2017. It was founded by its Director and aims to train lecturers from overseas universities, who deliver their subjects using English Medium Instruction (EMI).

The Provider has one Director, who is the sole owner. There is also a Senior Trainer. They are supported by a part-time administrator and the Website and Marketing Manager.

The courses are of one to two weeks' duration. The majority of the courses are run in Oxford, with some provision also delivered abroad for universities as required. The participants come from overseas universities who sponsor their staff to undertake the training in order to enable them to deliver their programmes in English effectively as part of the university's strategy to attract more international participants. All the training courses are developed and certificated by Oxford EMI, who have no accreditation arrangements with awarding organisations.

The Provider owns its administration office and rents teaching and residential accommodation from the University of Oxford colleges for the duration of each short course during university holiday periods and at local hotels during term time. The teaching venues include Saint Anthony's College, Saint Catherine's College, Christ Church College, Trinity College, and the University Examination Halls. They are all situated in or close to the centre of Oxford. The Provider has a maximum capacity of around 170 participants on the seven to eight short courses that are offered.

2. Brief description of the current provision

Oxford EMI offers three short courses based on EMI. These are EMI for University Lecturers, Support for EMI Teachers and Present Your Institution to an International Audience. The EMI for University Lecturers is the most frequently delivered course. The courses are used to train higher education lecturers from overseas universities in advanced techniques and teaching approaches for the delivery of courses through the medium of the English language, where English is not the first language of the teachers or the students.

The courses are delivered to staff from a range of discipline areas, including subjects such as engineering, science, mathematics, humanities and the arts. Course content includes aspects of pedagogy, language awareness and integrating international students into universities. All courses are full time and residential.

All participants are from overseas universities. At the time of the inspection, there were nine participants from a Chinese university attending the EMI for University Lecturers course, the majority of whom were female.

Participants must meet the entry criteria of at least Level B (Intermediate Level) Common European Reference for Languages (CEFR) language competency. All participants complete an application form, which sets out their previous experience and English Language competency level, along with any special requirements. They are enrolled on the programme at any time during the year and are usually selected for the programme by their university.

3. Inspection process

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one day. Meetings took place with the Director, the Senior Trainer, the administrator, the Website and Marketing Manager, participants and a student helper. A tour of the venue where the training was being carried out was undertaken and a training session was observed. A visit to the hotel where the participants were staying also took place. A range of documentation was reviewed both in advance and during the visit. The Provider positively engaged with the inspection process and cooperated fully with the inspector throughout the preparatory period and during the visit.

4. Inspection History

Inspection Type	Date
Full Accreditation	27 September 2017

PART B – JUDGEMENTS 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 no significant changes since the last inspection.

2. Response to actions points in last report

3.3 The Provider must develop formal performance reviews and appraisals to support ongoing staff development in line with organisation requirements.

The Provider has put in place a formal performance review process as part of the annual review of the operation of the business. Each trainer's effectiveness is also reviewed by the training team following each day's delivery of the programme.

8.2 The Provider must develop annual monitoring and review reports to support transparent monitoring and enhancement of the provision.

The Provider has put in place an annual strategic planning process that takes into account intelligence gathered by monitoring the delivery of each programme. Qualitative and quantitative information is used to enable the team to discuss the further development and enhancement of the programme and the strategic direction of the business. This has enabled a more strategic approach to future planning. Although the provision is small, this is an effective way for the Provider to keep track of developments and to make informed choices as to the future direction of the organisation.

17.7 The Provider must make appropriate arrangements to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

A risk assessment is carried out prior to the delivery of each course. All staff have completed appropriate online training and are using the knowledge gained to inform their work with participants and to provide appropriate support. Issues related to radicalisation and extremism are communicated to participants at induction along with the policy on radicalisation and extremism, as well as other information regarding cultural differences and British values. Staff feel more confident in these issues following their training.

19.2 The Provider must develop a formal written complaints procedure for participants to ensure that a fair and consistent approach is utilised in response to any participants' concerns.

As part of the induction process, participants are made aware of the formal complaints procedure and how it may be used. During the induction, the Director explains that this is to ensure a fair and consistent approach is utilised in response to any participant concerns. However, as the Provider is a very small organisation and all the staff work very closely in a collegiate manner with the participants, any concerns which tend to be minor, such as food choices, are dealt with as they arise.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

The Provider should consider developing more formal methods of recording meeting outcomes to enhance the effectiveness of communication.

Meetings are now recorded and minutes are produced with outcomes identified. The Director and Senior Trainer consider that this process helps in their future planning of the business.

The Provider should consider introducing a systematic performance review procedure to ensure consistency as the provision and the number of staff increase.

The Director has carried out a systematic performance review as part of her planning for the future direction of the business. During this review, she has considered the scope of provision and whether to further develop and extend the training opportunities that EMI offers both in this country and abroad.

To facilitate longer term comparative analysis of course outcomes, the Provider should consider the introduction of qualitative measures to track and review the quality of courses and participants' satisfaction.

The Director and the Senior Trainer now consider both qualitative and quantitative measures to track and review the effectiveness of their courses following the delivery of each course and use this intelligence to inform future developments.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

The Provider has a clearly defined organisational structure. Staff have job descriptions setting out their duties and responsibilities. All staff hold appropriate qualifications. The Senior Trainer and Director have extensive knowledge and experience of delivering training for teachers and the development of pedagogy and are experts in their field.

The administrator has a clear job description and has a good experience organizing events and courses, as well as liaising with customers. She is clear about her role and has a good understanding of her administrative responsibilities. Participant feedback confirms satisfaction with the administrative support. All queries and applications are dealt with promptly, including requests for further information and acceptance of the application.

Participants are asked to complete a feedback survey at the end of their course and are then contacted six months after course completion to evaluate the impact of their learning on their practice. Stakeholder feedback is used to review courses and informs further developments. Completion rates for courses are very high.

The Provider has a range of clear information sheets on the courses offered, which are available through the website and in hard copy. Copies of course information sheets are sent to participants post application. They include a schedule of course delivery.

The website provides information about the delivery of the Provider's courses in Oxford Colleges and the nature of accommodation offered. Although all of the information on the website is accurate, the website could be further developed to improve the marketing of the Provider. The Provider is also considering posting pre-course information, possibly in the form of questionnaires or tasks and follow-up exercises that would be useful to participants. The Director is also planning to provide a platform on the website to build a community of learning for alumni of Oxford EMI.

Attendance registers are completed for every session, with participants asked to sign in to confirm their attendance. Completed registers are passed to the administrator for logging and retention in the administrative office. Attendances are confirmed with the sponsoring university, as required. The attendance monitoring and support procedures are clear and well organised and the participants understand the attendance requirements.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Teaching is delivered by the Director and the Senior Trainer, who have a long experience of English Language teaching. The Director has worked in training English teachers since 1983 and is a former Director of International Programmes at the University of Oxford and a Senior Research Fellow. The Senior Trainer has developed and taught EMI courses for the British Council around the world, as well as developing provision in collaboration with the Department of Education at Oxford University.

The Director continues to work with the Department of Education at Oxford University and has extensive experience of managing programmes and staff to deliver English language teaching programmes. The Senior Trainer has developed and delivered programmes for universities and other recognised English language training organisations. As a result, the programmes are well planned to meet the needs of the participants.

All courses are clearly timetabled. Schemes of work and other learning materials are made available to all participants in advance of the course. The courses are carefully planned with clear and detailed tutor notes which support the effective delivery of the teaching. Participants confirm materials are accessible and helpful in supporting their pedagogical development.

The courses are effectively organised and managed to meet the needs of the participants. Courses are supported by appropriate technology and other resources which are carefully planned to ensure participants' engagement and achievement.

Trainers use a range of teaching techniques and activities, which are differentiated to take account of the needs of the individual participants. Where a participant may need additional support, this is provided on an individual basis by the tutors, both through the provision of additional materials and face-to-face support.

Participants undertake a series of activities which develop their understanding of relevant skills and techniques. They receive peer and trainer feedback on activities throughout the course to help develop their competencies. The regular peer and trainer feedback, alongside the self-evaluation of performance, effectively builds participant confidence and skills and represents good practice.

All sessions are focused on building teaching and learning skills, which the participants can then adapt to their particular subject specialisms, and styles of teaching. The activities build towards the final micro teach session, which is observed by participants and the staff. Participants receive feedback from their peers, and individual feedback from the Senior Trainer. As a result, the participants develop their competencies in the use of the English language to deliver their teaching and as a medium for instruction.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Initial pastoral support is focused on ensuring that participants are able to settle in quickly and that they have appropriate contact numbers should any unexpected situations arise.

Student helpers are employed to support each course. They assist with participants' orientation and broader non study related information and guidance. Student helpers know Oxford and the university very well. They provide valuable advice and guidance on Oxford's facilities and venues.

On arrival, the participants are provided with a formal welcome pack, which includes guidance on the programme location, activities, advice on seeking additional information and on working with others and raising concerns. Participants greatly value the student helpers' friendly and informal support and advice.

Participants are also part of a social media group, which also includes Oxford EMI staff, and are able to ask questions and gain advice online. The pastoral information and support systems are clear, well formulated and meet the requirements of the participants. This represents good practice.

A clear and varied social programme, which appropriately reflects participants' interests, is organised for each group. Participants are able to sign up for events of interest including concerts, shopping and sightseeing trips. Organised activities can be added to reflect group interests as requested. Student helpers assist with the organisation of the social activities under the supervision of experienced Oxford EMI staff.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

All premises used for the delivery of teaching and for participant accommodation are hired for the duration of each course from the University of Oxford, either in the college halls in holiday periods or in the examination halls in term time. The colleges offer spacious teaching rooms, social areas and access to gardens and dining halls

All premises are secure and well maintained. Health and safety guidance is clear. Access to all areas is monitored. There are reception staff in the examination halls to check entry. The Oxford colleges and the examination halls provide very well-maintained accommodation for the Oxford EMI courses. The experience of working and studying in such an iconic environment is a strong feature of the courses.

Staff have access to space which can be booked if necessary, to hold meetings.

The administrative office accommodation is attached to the Director's home, which the Director owns.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The strong pedagogical foundation of the course which is apparent from regular peer and trainer feedback, along with highly skilled questioning techniques and self-evaluation of performance creates an atmosphere of supported challenge.

The employment of student helpers, who help participants with their induction and provide information and guidance on local events, venues and activities, aids the participants to quickly engage in the learning process and helps them to feel welcomed and supported.

The Oxford University environment provides an excellent learning location for the participants.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

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

It is recommended that the Provider should consider developing the use of the website to further enhance the learning experience and offer an opportunity to build a learning community of EMI alumni.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS - FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE