

COLLEGE SCHEME DOCUMENT



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

RAISING STANDARDS IN THE
GLOBAL EDUCATION MARKET

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This document must be read in conjunction with the Accreditation Handbook

1. Introduction

BAC accreditation is a voluntary quality assurance scheme for independent providers of further and higher education and vocational training courses.

BAC College accreditation is the standard accreditation scheme for independent FE and HE institutions and covers a very wide range of institutions in terms of provision and size. While the same standard is required of all institutions accredited under this scheme, the range of provision on offer is very broad, including:

- Adult education and skills for life
- Business and professional education
- Creative and performing arts
- Specialist vocational training
- Study abroad placements
- Traditional higher education
- Tutorial colleges
- University preparation

BAC's College accreditation scheme typically covers the full range of activities provided by a college or similar institution and is not restricted to specific courses within the total operation. Where accreditation is applied for a section of the institution this is confirmed at the application stage. For example, the institution may seek accreditation for provision only managed from the UK or offered in the UK. This accreditation does not extend to activities which take place outside the institution itself (for instance, franchised programmes, satellite summer schools or separate branches, whether in the UK or internationally) or which are promoted and delivered under a different name, unless BAC has given specific approval for the inclusion of such activities within the institution's accreditation.

2. Eligibility for accreditation

Any independent education or training institution is eligible for College accreditation provided that the following requirements are met in addition to the general requirements listed in the Accreditation Handbook:

- The institution offers programmes that extend beyond 26 weeks.
- The institution offers programmes of further and/or higher education.
- The institution is able to provide evidence of its financial stability.
- Effective control of the institution is the responsibility of an accountable management.

- The institution is led by a proprietor or designated principal/director, who must have clear, written contractual responsibilities for the running of the institution and for the quality of its work.
- There are no grounds for believing the proprietor, principal/director or any other senior manager to be unfit to take responsibility for the institution (e.g. an assessment of any previous position held at another institution known to BAC, in particular, any institution that consistently failed to meet BAC's standards or had been withdrawn by BAC).

For all institutions based outside the UK:

- The institution is licenced by a local, regional or national licencing agency if such licencing is mandatory and/or holds accreditation from a nationally recognised educational or professional body and/or meets all mandatory requirements to operate.

The eligibility criteria are applicable throughout the accreditation cycle and it is the responsibility of the institution to prove that it meets the eligibility criteria. BAC can withdraw accreditation if an institution fails to meet the eligibility criteria at any point in the cycle.

The following types of institutions will not normally be considered eligible for college accreditation:

- Institutions that are wholly publicly funded or wholly responsible to a government department or an institution in receipt of state grants, thereby subject to inspection by a designated national body.
- Institutions that are solely or predominantly providers of education for students of compulsory school age (i.e. 16 years and under).
- Institutions that are solely providers of courses in English as a foreign language (EFL) or English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).
- Institutions which only offer courses of less than six months duration (please see the Short Course Provider scheme document).

The final decision regarding an institution's eligibility for the accreditation scheme rests with BAC.

3. Accreditation process

Prospective applicants are invited to contact BAC to discuss their eligibility for the scheme.

If BAC is satisfied that eligibility criteria have been met, the institution must submit a completed application form, along with supporting documents that include evidence of financial stability and details of referees who will be contacted to provide testimony to the reputation of the institution.

Once the application has been processed and passed, the next stage is the inspection. The inspection will assess the institution's full range of provision and also require evidence that the management is capable of maintaining acceptable standards during the period of accreditation and operating within the requirements of relevant local legislation.

The full inspection will measure the institution and its provision against BAC's minimum standards. The inspection report is then considered by the Accreditation Committee, which determines whether to award, defer or refuse accreditation. This committee is independent of BAC and is comprised of members from the education sector.

For comprehensive information on the whole of the accreditation process, please see the Accreditation Handbook.

4. Accreditation cycle

Accreditation is valid for four years.

An accredited institution is subject to an interim inspection during an accreditation cycle.

During an accreditation cycle, an institution is subject to all BAC requirements. If there are any significant changes to the management, provision or premises and facilities, a supplementary inspection may be required for the continuation of accreditation. Accredited institutions are notified six months before the end of the accreditation period so that a full inspection can be arranged; the inspection report is then presented to the Accreditation Committee for consideration of re-accreditation before the accreditation period ends.

5. Inspection process

A full inspection is arranged following the successful completion of the first stage of the application process.

An inspector or inspection team with appropriate experience for the institution to be inspected is chosen. An inspection team consists of a lead inspector and usually one specialist inspector for larger institutions. It is usual practice for the inspection to take three days, but the actual number of days allocated will reflect the breadth and size of the institution and its services.

With newly-accredited institutions, an interim inspection is organised in the first twelve months of gaining accreditation. For accredited institutions, an interim inspection is organised in the middle of the four-year accreditation cycle.

Institutions are required to complete and submit a self-evaluation report assessing their quality assurance mechanisms against specific criteria prior to the inspection being conducted.

5.1 Inspection areas

A full inspection covers the following inspection areas:

- Governance, management, staffing and administration
- Academic management
- Teaching, learning and assessment
- Student welfare
- Premises and facilities
- Online, distance and blended learning (if applicable)

Management of quality and the institution's quality assurance procedures are assessed throughout each inspection area.

5.2 Minimum standards

The minimum standards for college accreditation are set out in Section 12. Details are provided of the documents that will need to be supplied and reviewed during the inspection.

5.3 Legal and statutory compliance

All new applicants and those applying for re-accreditation are required to sign a declaration stating that the institution complies with all relevant statutory requirements in force in the country of operation in connection with such matters as:

- Health and safety
- Safeguarding
- Employment law
- Copyright
- Disability provision
- Equal opportunities
- Planning consent
- Data protection
- Public liability

It is the institution's responsibility and the personal responsibility of the head of the institution to ensure that all requirements are met.

BAC inspectors will not inspect the above areas but will note any observed breach of regulations. Although compliance with statutory requirements is not a BAC minimum standard, evidence of non-compliance may provide the Accreditation Committee with grounds for refusal or withdrawal of accreditation.

6. Approved candidates for accreditation

The 'approved candidate for accreditation' process is available to any newly established College institution that has not yet recruited participants to its programmes.

- The status of 'approved candidate for BAC accreditation as a College' can be awarded following a successful candidacy inspection.
- The institution will be approved as a 'candidate for BAC accreditation' if the Accreditation Committee is satisfied that the institution meets or exceeds BAC's minimum standards for premises, management, staffing, administration and documentation relevant to student welfare. The inspectors also need to be satisfied that robust quality assurance policies and systems are in place.
- 'Approved candidate' status is awarded for a period of six months, during which time the institution must become fully operational.

- If the institution fails to agree on a date for the accreditation inspection within this period, its 'approved candidate' status will lapse unless the Accreditation Committee agrees to allow an extension.

Approved candidate status is accepted by United Kingdom Visa and Immigration (UKVI) as evidence of accreditation, which entitles the institution to enrol international participants on standard visitor visas for courses of up to six months and, for English language providers, for up to 11 months.

7. Programmes and awards

BAC does not validate or accredit qualifications. BAC's policy is that institutions should offer courses leading to approved external awards granted by recognised awarding bodies. BAC does, however, accept that there may be instances where there is no appropriate external awarding body and that the institution will only offer internal awards.

BAC's inspectors will consider the accuracy of any claims made by institutions as to the level and status of any internal awards. This will include a requirement for evidence of the extent to which the institution's internal awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study. BAC encourages institutions to involve external moderators in the assessment where appropriate.

8. Accreditation fees

All institutions awarded accreditation under this scheme will qualify for the College scheme's annual accreditation fee, which is calculated on the basis of the number of students per annum. This is due when accreditation has been awarded and then every September thereafter.

All other fees (including application and inspection fees) are the same for each type of accreditation.

Accurate figures of student numbers must be supplied to BAC once per year on request. If such figures are not supplied by the deadline given, the full maximum accreditation fees will be charged. Failure to pay the annual accreditation fee by the deadline given on the invoice may result in the withdrawal of accreditation.

9. Accreditation statements and marks

Institutions that have been awarded accreditation may use the statement of accreditation in their promotional materials, subject to certain conditions.

Acceptable forms of the statement are:

- “accredited by the British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education as a College”
- “accredited by the British Accreditation Council as a College”
- “accredited by BAC as a College”
- “BAC accredited as a College”

Once accredited, institutions may use the BAC accreditation mark of the College accreditation scheme in their promotional materials, subject to certain conditions. The standard accreditation mark features the BAC logo, colour-coded to the specific accreditation scheme, and the word ‘accredited’.

Colleges awarded ‘approved candidate for accreditation’ status must use the accreditation mark which incorporates the words ‘accredited approved candidate’.

10. Meeting standards and key indicators

Some of these standards and key indicators may not be applicable to your organisation. This is a judgment that will be made by the inspector/s during the inspection process.

11. Contacting BAC

Further guidance and details of the generic requirements and responsibilities for BAC-accredited institutions can be found in the Accreditation Handbook.

Please contact info@the-bac.org for further information.

12. Accreditation scheme standards

Inspection area – governance, management, staffing and administration

1. The institution 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, advisers or governing body.
- 1.2 Those responsible for governance understand the institution's strengths and weaknesses, provide support, and hold senior managers accountable for improving the quality of learning.
- 1.3 The head of the institution and other senior managers are suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and are effective in carrying them out.
- 1.4 There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff, including those working at the delivery venue or remotely.
- 1.5 The institution has a written statement of its mission and goals that effectively guides its activities, is communicated to all stakeholders and is effectively implemented and regularly reviewed.
- 1.6 The institution has a written risk management strategy, which includes financial planning and is effectively implemented and regularly reviewed.
- 1.7 The institution conducts its financial matters professionally, transparently and with appropriate probity.

2. The administration of the institution is effective

- 2.1 Administrators are suitably qualified or experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and duties and are effective in carrying them out.
- 2.2 The size of the administrative team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the institution.
- 2.3 The administrative support available to the management is clearly defined, documented and understood.
- 2.4 Administrative procedures and systems are up to date, thorough, well-documented and effectively disseminated across the institution.
- 2.5 Data collection and collation systems are effective in supporting the administration of the institution.

- 2.6 Students' and teachers' personal records are sufficiently detailed and regularly updated.
- 2.7 The institution has a robust security system with policies in place for protecting the data of its staff, students and self-employed teachers.

3. The institution recruits appropriate staff

- 3.1 There are appropriate policies and effective procedures for the recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced staff, which include, for self-employed staff, the development of a signed performance service level agreement.
- 3.2 Experience and qualifications are appropriately checked and verified before recruitment, and records are accurately maintained.
- 3.3 The recruitment process for teachers working remotely includes an online interview with cameras turned on.
- 3.4 There is an effective system for regularly reviewing the performance of all staff, which, for teachers, includes regular, scheduled course delivery observations.
- 3.5 All staff are treated fairly as per the institution's own published policies, and they have access to an appropriate grievances and appeals procedure.
- 3.6 Managerial and administrative staff are appropriately supported in their continuing professional development.

4. Publicity materials, both printed and online, provide a comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate description of the institution and its courses

- 4.1 Text and images provide an accurate depiction of the institution's location, premises, facilities and the range and nature of resources and services offered.
- 4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate, readily accessible and up to date.
- 4.3 Students are informed of the full cost of all courses, including the costs of any assessments, activities and required materials, prior to enrolling at the institution.
- 4.4 The information provided ensures that students are well informed of the status of the qualifications offered, including the awarding body and level of award.
- 4.5 The institution's key policies are accessible through the website.

5. The institution takes reasonable care to recruit and enrol suitable students for its courses

- 5.1 The institution ensures that the specific courses on which students are registered are likely to meet the students' expectations and needs.
- 5.2 Entry requirements for each course are set at an appropriate level and are clearly stated in the course descriptions that are made available to prospective students.
- 5.3 A formal application process ensures that any claimed qualifications and language competency requirements are checked and verified.
- 5.4 Applicants are provided with sufficient information to enable them to make a judgment on the suitability of the courses and their delivery methods, and can discuss any concerns before registration.
- 5.5 There are effective processes in place to confirm that students meet published entry requirements and have the capability to complete the programmes on which they are enrolling.
- 5.6 The institution replies to all application enquiries in line with its appropriate target response times, and all stakeholders are briefed properly on the nature and requirements of its courses.
- 5.7 International recruitment agents are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated.

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

- 6.1 There is a clear policy on student attendance and punctuality, which is communicated to all students and any other stakeholders.
- 6.2 Accurate and secure records of attendance and punctuality at each session are kept for all students, collated centrally and regularly reviewed.
- 6.3 Student absences are followed up promptly, and appropriate action is taken.

7. The institution has effective systems to monitor its own standards and assess its own performance with a view to continuous improvement

- 7.1 There are effective systems for monitoring and periodically reviewing all aspects of the institution's performance.

- 7.2 The institution has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students and other stakeholders, such as staff, partners and employers, on all aspects of the institution's provision, including formal student representation where appropriate.
- 7.3 Feedback is obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis.
- 7.4 The feedback is reviewed by management, and appropriate action is taken.
- 7.5 There is a mechanism for reporting to the students what the institution has done in response to their feedback.
- 7.6 Reports are compiled at least annually, which include the results of the institution's performance reviews and analysis of appropriate data, including students' progress from their starting points, course completion rates, achievement rates, students' destinations, student and other stakeholder feedback and action plans.
- 7.7 Action plans, including those for improvement, are implemented and regularly reviewed, with outcomes reported to management.
- 7.8 Good practice is effectively identified and disseminated across the institution.

Examples of documentation required

- The strategy/development plan including strategic targets.
- Performance data maintained by the institution, for example, examination pass rates/stakeholder feedback scores/attendance rates.
- Annual performance reviews against key performance indicators and strategic targets at institution/department/course and programme levels.
- List of committees/boards together with their terms of reference and membership.
- Documentation explaining the link between governance and management.
- Minutes of relevant committee and/or board meetings.
- Minutes of staff meetings.
- Written statement of the institution's mission and goals.
- Documentation on risk planning and completed risk assessments.
- Financial planning documentation.
- Detailed job descriptions of administrative, academic and pastoral support staff.
- General management and administrative policies, procedures and systems.
- Samples of administration correspondence with students.
- Staff personnel files and records.
- Student files with details of registration, enrolment, attendance and qualifications.

- Policies to protect the data of students and staff.
- Key policies underpinning the running of the institution, for example, relating to staff recruitment, staff performance monitoring and staff development, quality assurance, assessment, and student welfare.
- Detailed Curricula Vitae (CVs) for all staff including all academic/teaching staff to include evidence of academic and teaching qualifications.
- Up-to-date, signed contracts/agreements of employment for all staff.
- Self-employment contracts/agreements for all self-employed staff.
- Staff, including academic and teaching staff, induction programmes.
- Staff appraisal procedures and completed documentation.
- Evidence of monitoring of teaching staff, including completed classroom observation records.
- Staff grievances and appeals procedures.
- Information for students relating to qualifications and awarding bodies.
- Completed student application forms and any student contracts.
- Initial guidance documents for students.
- Sample placement/initial tests, including completed documentation.
- Briefing materials for agents.
- Evidence of attendance monitoring, including class registers for each course/programme.
- Internal and external quality assurance documentation, including copies of any policies used as a means of quality management, annual reports that include an analysis of appropriate data, including students' progress from their starting points, course completion rates, achievement rates in line with national averages where available, and students' destinations, student and other stakeholder feedback and action plans.
- Samples and summaries of any student and other stakeholder feedback, including completed feedback questionnaires.
- Documentation relating to policies and procedures for informing stakeholders of the response made to their feedback.
- Action plans for dealing with stakeholder feedback.
- Copies of annual reports to the awarding bodies for the previous three years for each academic programme, or from the start date if the courses have not been available for that time.
- Copies of audits and academic reviews carried out by or on behalf of the awarding bodies or partnership institutions.
- Responses made as a result of external audits.

Inspection area – academic management

8. Academic management is effective

- 8.1 There is a suitably qualified and/or experienced academic manager or academic management team with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment.
- 8.2 The curriculum effectively supports good student outcomes represented by data on students' progress from their starting points, course completion rates, achievement rates in line with national averages, where available and students' destinations.
- 8.3 The curriculum offered meets the needs of a range of relevant stakeholders, such as employers and members of the wider community, such as chambers of commerce, local authorities and charitable organisations, where applicable.
- 8.4 Classes are timetabled, and rooms allocated appropriately for the courses offered.
- 8.5 The allocation of teachers to classes provides a consistent learning experience, and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency across all the provision.
- 8.6 The commissioning of individual course materials is managed effectively, and the content and style of the materials are checked to ensure standardisation across the provision.
- 8.7 There are appropriate policies and procedures for the acquisition of teaching and learning resources, which ensure that all teachers have access to the appropriate quantity and quality of resources on the day(s) of the course for the benefit of the students.
- 8.8 Teachers are supported in their continuing professional development and are enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the students' learning.

Examples of documentation required

- Summaries of results/grades awarded for the previous three years for each academic programme or from the start date if the courses have not been available for that time.
- A detailed timetable of the courses/classes taking place at the time of the inspection.
- Policies and procedures for the acquisition of teaching/training and learning resources and examples of learning resources, including online resources.

Inspection area – teaching, learning and assessment

9. The courses are planned and designed in ways that enable students to succeed

- 9.1 The courses' design and content reflect current knowledge and practice, are regularly reviewed and revised and take into account input from relevant stakeholders.
- 9.2 The content of the courses enables students to develop the knowledge and skills required to meet the learning outcomes, in the case of vocational courses, to develop the behaviours and attitudes required for employment and to be successful in any final assessments.
- 9.3 Course materials are designed for a specific and clearly stated level of study and include appropriate support material.
- 9.4 Course materials are appropriately presented and sufficiently comprehensive to enable students to achieve the course objectives.
- 9.5 Courses maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of learning outcomes established by the awarding and/or examination body.
- 9.6 Ongoing assessments appropriately reflect the content and standards of final assessments.
- 9.7 The courses are designed so that students are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills.
- 9.8 The academic and/or professional backgrounds and particular support needs of students are taken into account in the planning and design of the course.

10. Teachers are suitable for the courses to which they are allocated and are effective in their delivery

- 10.1 Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced.
- 10.2 Teachers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communication skills that allow them to deliver the courses effectively.
- 10.3 Teachers respond to the different backgrounds and particular support needs of students in their delivery of the teaching sessions.

- 10.4 Teachers employ effective strategies to involve all students in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content.
- 10.5 The institution has appropriate methods in place to encourage and measure student engagement.

11. Students receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, both of which are effectively monitored

- 11.1 Students are provided with an assessment schedule in which required assessments and revision periods are detailed in advance with clear submission deadlines.
- 11.2 Assessment strategies are relevant to the content and nature of the courses and focused on measuring students' achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
- 11.3 Students' progress and assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of students who are not making satisfactory progress, and prompt intervention takes place if required.
- 11.4 Students receive regular, detailed and supportive feedback on their assessments and overall performance and progress, which are effectively monitored.
- 11.5 The feedback provided to individual students is tailored to meet their specific needs and is constructive in its nature and delivery.
- 11.6 Students have appropriate access to teachers and/or personal tutors, outside the scheduled course delivery time.
- 11.7 The institution takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage academic malpractice, including cheating and plagiarism, and penalise offenders.
- 11.8 Prompt action is taken when students miss deadlines, or the work submitted is not of a satisfactory standard.
- 11.9 There are clear policies and procedures for students to claim mitigating circumstances.
- 11.10 There are clear policies and procedures for students to appeal against marks awarded.

12. The institution offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies

- 12.1 For courses leading to awards from the institution's country of domicile, the awarding body is recognised by the relevant regulator.
- 12.2 For courses leading to an award from an international educational institution that is authorised to operate in its country of domicile, the institution has a formal agreement in place with the international institution.

13. There is a clear rationale for courses leading to internal awards, i.e. awards that are made on the basis of the outcomes of formal internal assessment methods

- 13.1 There is a clear statement of the level claimed relative to the relevant national qualifications' framework and evidence that students who receive the award meet the stated requirements for that level.
- 13.2 There is evidence of the extent to which the awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study.
- 13.3 There is appropriate input to the assessment process from objective specialists who are external to the institution.

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

- 14.1 The institution complies with the requirements of the relevant awarding bodies in terms of examination security and administration.
- 14.2 For internal awards, there are effective systems in place for examination security and administration.
- 14.3 For internal awards, there are clear procedures for students to appeal against their marks.

15. There is appropriate provision of advice for students intending to proceed to employment or continued education

- 15.1 Students have access to impartial advice and guidance from an appropriate staff member on further study and career opportunities.
- 15.2 If the institution offers courses preparing students for higher/further education, they have access to advice from a designated staff member on selecting courses and institutions and on the application process.

Examples of documentation required

- A list of students on-site on the day(s) of the inspection, broken down by level of English competence (where relevant), gender, age, country of origin, programme and start date.
- Detailed, up-to-date list of programmes available.
- Whole course/academic year plans/schemes of work.
- Module/course descriptions.
- Examples of course materials.
- Completed lesson/lecture plans.
- Policies to encourage and measure student engagement.
- Assessment procedures/schedule of assessments/samples of assessment methods/assessment tools/statement of intended learning outcomes.
- Records of student progress.
- Samples of marked students' work with feedback to the student.
- Policies to prevent cheating and plagiarism.
- Students' academic appeals and grievance procedures.
- Agreements with awarding bodies.
- Copies of external examiners' reports for the previous three years for each academic programme or from the start date if the course has not been available for that time.
- Documents relating to external moderation.
- Career advice and guidance documentation.

Inspection area – student welfare

16. Students receive welfare support appropriate to their age, background and circumstances

- 16.1 There is at least one named staff member responsible for student welfare who is suitably trained and/or experienced, accessible to all students and available to provide advice.
- 16.2 Students receive appropriate information, advice and guidance before the start and throughout their course of study.
- 16.3 Students receive an appropriate induction and relevant information at the start of the course.
- 16.4 Students receive appropriate information on the pastoral and emergency support available, and referral to external specialists, as required, in connection with students' mental health and well-being.
- 16.5 Students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified, and appropriate support is provided to meet their needs.

- 16.6 The institution has policies to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour, including cyberbullying, and these are effectively implemented.
- 16.7 Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place for students under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults, which are regularly reviewed.
- 16.8 Effective arrangements, including a policy, risk assessment and staff training, are in place to protect students from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- 16.9 There is an e-policy in place that references any existing staff and student codes of conduct and covers students' on-site use of social media and devices such as mobile telephones, tablets and cameras.
- 16.10 The institution collects contact details for students, and their emergency contact, and appropriate staff can access the information quickly and easily, in and out of normal operating hours.

17. International students are provided with specific advice and assistance

- 17.1 International students receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and living in their host country.
- 17.2 International students receive an appropriate induction upon arrival, covering issues specific to the local area.
- 17.3 Information and advice specific to international students continue to be available throughout their course of study.
- 17.4 Provision of support takes into account cultural and religious considerations.

18. The fair treatment of students is ensured

- 18.1 Students apply for and are enrolled on courses under fair and transparent contractual terms and conditions, which include appropriate refund arrangements and a cooling-off period.
- 18.2 Students have access to a fair complaints procedure, of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course.
- 18.3 Students are advised of BAC's complaints procedure.

19. Residential accommodation that is directly managed by the institution is fit for purpose, well maintained and appropriately supervised

- 19.1 Any residential accommodation is clean, safe and of a standard which is adequate to meet the needs of students.
- 19.2 Any residential accommodation where students under the age of 18 are accommodated is open to inspection by the appropriate authorities, where applicable.
- 19.3 Clear rules regarding fire safety and other health and safety procedures are in place, and appropriate precautions are taken for the security of students and their property.
- 19.4 A level of supervision is provided which meets the needs of students.
- 19.5 Appropriate measures are in place to ensure that students under the age of 18 and those over the age of 18 are separated when allocating accommodation.

20. The welfare of students in home-stay accommodation is ensured, and the institution's relationship with the hosts is properly managed

- 20.1 Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation which provides a safe and comfortable living environment for students and is appropriately located for travel to and from the institution.
- 20.2 Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before students are placed there and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the institution.
- 20.3 The institution has appropriate contracts in place with any hosts, clearly setting out the rules, terms and conditions of the provision.
- 20.4 Appropriate advice and support are given to both hosts and students before and during the home-stay placement.
- 20.5 Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for student feedback and prompt action taken in the event of problems.

21. Students have access to an appropriate social programme and information on leisure activities in the local area

- 21.1 Students are provided with appropriate information on opportunities for participation in events and other leisure activities which may be of interest.
- 21.2 The social programme is responsive to the needs and wishes of students.
- 21.3 Any activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability for the majority of students.

- 21.4 The activities organised by the institution are supervised by a responsible adult representative with suitable qualifications and/or experience.
- 21.5 Off-site social activities are subject to an appropriate risk assessment, and suitable safeguards are put in place as a result.

Examples of documentation required

- Induction packs for home and international students, including information on the pastoral and emergency support available and details of external specialists in mental health and well-being.
- Policy documents related to discrimination, bullying, and abusive behaviour, including cyberbullying.
- Safeguarding policy.
- Background checks for staff, for example, the Disclosure and Barring Service in the UK.
- Records of staff training in safeguarding.
- See the safeguarding checklist for further documentation.
- An e-policy that covers students' on-site use of social media and devices such as mobile telephones, tablets and cameras.
- Complaints policy and procedure documentation including reference to BAC's complaints procedure if relevant.
- Documents related to residential accommodation.
- Documents related to home-stay accommodation including advice to home-stay students and organisations.
- Students' social programme.

Inspection area – premises and facilities

22. The institution has secure possession of and access to its premises

- 22.1 The institution has formal arrangements in place, which means it has possession of and/or access to suitable premises.
- 22.2 The institution has access to suitable external premises of a temporary or occasional nature for academic or non-academic purposes.

23. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for students and staff

- 23.1 Access to the premises is appropriately restricted and secured.
- 23.2 The premises are maintained in an adequate state of repair, decoration and cleanliness.

- 23.3 There are specific safety rules in hazardous areas, which are readily accessible to students, staff and visitors.
- 23.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to students, staff and visitors.
- 23.5 There is adequate signage inside and outside the premises and facilities for the display of general information.
- 23.6 There is adequate circulation space for the number of students and staff accommodated, and a suitable area in which to receive visitors.
- 23.7 There are toilet facilities of an appropriate number and level of cleanliness.
- 23.8 There is adequate heating and ventilation in all rooms.

24. Classrooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered

- 24.1 Classrooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation for the teaching sessions allocated to them.
- 24.2 Classrooms and any specialised learning areas are equipped to a level which allows for the effective delivery of each course.
- 24.3 There are physical and digital facilities suitable for conducting the assessments required for each course.

25. There are appropriate additional facilities for students and staff

- 25.1 Students have access to sufficient space so that they can carry out their own private work and/or study.
- 25.2 Teachers have access to sufficient space for preparing teaching sessions, marking work and relaxation.
- 25.3 Students and staff have access to space and facilities suitable for relaxation and the consumption of food and drink, including facilities that are located outside the premises.
- 25.4 There are individual offices or rooms in which teachers and senior management can hold private meetings and a room of sufficient size to hold staff meetings.
- 25.5 Administrative offices are adequate in size and are resourced for the effective administration of the institution.

Examples of documentation required

- Floor plan of each site being inspected.
- Health and safety guidance for students, staff and visitors.

Inspection area – online, distance and blended learning component (if applicable)

26. Management, staffing and administration of online, distance and blended learning is effective

- 26.1 Senior managers have an understanding of the specific requirements of online, distance and blended learning.
- 26.2 Data collection and collation systems include the logging of teacher and student submissions and interaction, and appropriate action is taken if the timeliness of these falls below expectations.
- 26.3 There are established processes which enable the institution to verify that the student who is registered on the course is the same person who attends, completes the course and receives any course credit.
- 26.4 Staff monitor the online activity of students and teachers and take action immediately if there are concerns about cyberbullying or other online risks to students.

27. Online course management is effective

- 27.1 There is a suitably qualified manager or management team with experience in online, distance and blended learning, who have responsibility for course delivery and the management of the teachers.
- 27.2 The institution has a sufficient number of qualified online teachers to give individualised instructional service to each student.
- 27.3 The allocation of online teachers to courses provides a consistent learning experience, and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency.
- 27.4 Online delivery methods are sufficient to attain the stated course objectives and intended learning outcomes.
- 27.5 Online course designers make effective use of appropriate teaching aids and learning resources.
- 27.6 Suitable additional study aids are provided through investment in technology and/or issuing supplementary study materials.

28. Teachers have an appropriate level of technical knowledge

- 28.1 Teachers demonstrate an understanding of the specific challenges and demands of online, distance and blended learning.

28.2 Academic staff receive effective training and support to ensure the successful delivery of online and distance learning that meets the needs and interests of students.

28.3 Performance review procedures for online teachers incorporate regular monitoring of their feedback to students.

29. The enrolment process is comprehensive, transparent, and supportive to applicants

29.1 Students are made aware of the necessary level of digital literacy required to follow the stated courses.

30. Online services provided meet the reasonable needs of students

- 30.1 Students receive appropriate guidance and support to ensure they are able to study effectively through online and distance learning.
- 30.2 Staff are available to assist students to resolve issues of a general and/or technical nature, and all enquiries from students are handled promptly and sympathetically.
- 30.3 The institution ensures that students understand any system requirements and have access to appropriate technical advice to assist with technological problems, which are the institution's responsibility.
- 30.4 The institution supports and encourages peer interaction through a variety of channels, such as social media and virtual learning environment platforms.

31. The technology used to deliver the courses is fit for purpose and effective

- 31.1 The institution uses appropriate and readily accessible technology to optimise the interaction between the institution and the student and to enhance instructional and educational services.
- 31.2 The institution has access to the services of an experienced IT technician who can ensure that systems are operative at all times and provide appropriate support to teachers and staff working remotely.

Examples of documentation required

- Evidence of online teacher monitoring.
- Instructions and suggestions for students on how to study and use the online tutorial materials.

Appendix A – Glossary

Definitions and/or explanations of key terms in the BAC standards document.

Achievement rates – the goals and objectives related to the overall course objectives and intended learning outcomes that the student hopes to achieve as a result of studying on a course. The goals and objectives should include an element of stretching to support the continuous development of the student.

Active participation – the active and engaged involvement of students, such as proactive contributions, thoughtful interactions and enthusiastic participation, rather than passive observation or mere presence.

Adult – whilst the legal definition of an adult varies according to the law of different countries, for the purposes of this scheme, an adult is defined as someone who is aged 18 or over.

Assessment – a generic term for processes that measure students' learning, skills, and understanding.

Awarding bodies – in the UK, an awarding body is an examination board which sets examinations and awards qualifications. It does not always provide the courses that lead to a qualification. Often an awarding body will provide an approval process for institutions and those institutions, if they meet the criteria, are able to award qualifications that are accredited by that awarding body.

Course completion rates – the percentage of students who have successfully finished and fulfilled all the requirements and attained the learning outcomes or objectives set for the course by the institution within a specified time frame.

Course objectives – brief, clear statements that describe the overall intended purposes and expected results of undertaking a course of study.

Cyberbullying – the use of electronic communication to bully a person, defined as making use of behaviour that is repeated and intended to hurt someone and often aimed at certain groups, for example, because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature.

Extremism – holding extreme political or religious views that may deny rights to any group or individual. Extremism can refer to a range of views, for example, racism, homophobia, right-wing ideology and any religious extremism.

Feedback – this could be academic feedback following assessment and could be formal (written) or informal (tutorials and oral) feedback. Feedback is also obtained from different stakeholder groups. This could

be in the format of end-of-programme questionnaires or surveys from the students, internal committees with student and staff representation, or employer groups where the relevance of the provision to meet local or national requirements is discussed.

Governance – the system and processes through which the institution is managed directed, and controlled. It encompasses the structure, policies, and decision-making mechanisms that guide the institution's operations and strategic direction. For example, a governing body, board of trustees, or council is responsible for setting overall objectives, ensuring legal and regulatory compliance, appointing key personnel, such as the principal, and overseeing financial and academic matters.

Home-stay – an arrangement where students live with local host families while studying. The host families normally provide accommodation, meals and a supportive environment.

Independent learning – in addition to the contact hours with academic staff, students are expected to undertake independent learning. Independent learning places increased educational responsibility on the student for the achievement of objectives and the value of their goals. This can be facilitated through the provision of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) and ensuring that sufficient resources are made available to students to study independently.

Intended learning outcomes – an intended learning outcome describes in detail what students should know or be able to do on completion of a learning programme or part thereof. It may relate to knowledge, understanding and skills that the student did not have before undertaking the programme.

Key policies – these are policies that are considered crucial to the effective governance, management and operation of an organisation.

Students' destinations – the various paths and outcomes that students pursue after completing their studies, such as higher education, vocational training, employment, or other opportunities.

Student engagement – students influence the content, materials, and pace of teaching. The student is placed at the centre of the learning process. Students may lead learning activities, discuss topics that interest them, and engage in learning experiences outside the classroom, such as internships or online classes. Institutions will define how they encourage engagement in the learning process and must be able to assess its effectiveness.

Student outcomes – this can refer to either the individual or student cohort outcomes with reference to the intended goals of a course or programme of study or the actual academic achievements of the students. This is often benchmarked against key performance indicators set by the institution.

Mitigating circumstances – mitigating circumstances are any serious circumstances beyond the control of the student which may have adversely affected their academic performance. This could include medical conditions and personal and domestic circumstances.

Objective specialists – a specialist in the subject area, through academic or professional expertise, who is external to the institution and can therefore be objective.

Pastoral support – a service that gives help and support to students as well as provides information, advice and guidance about activities outside the standard academic teaching.

Probity (in relation to financial management) – the institution always follows principles of honesty, integrity and ethical behaviour when dealing with financial matters, ensuring that all financial decisions and actions are undertaken with complete openness and full responsibility.

Provision – the courses or programmes of study offered by the educational institution.

Plagiarism, including academic malpractice – the act of using someone else's ideas, words, or work without giving proper credit or acknowledgment and presenting it as original work.

Performance review – an internal review of how well the institution has achieved its mission and goals, through which the institution assesses what it does well and what it could develop and/or improve in the future.

Radicalisation – the process of an individual or a group of people adopting extreme political, religious or social doctrine or ideas.

Risk Management – the process of identifying, assessing and mitigating potential risks or uncertainties that could impact an organisation's strategy and objectives.

Robust security system – a system or set of processes which ensure that all data is protected from unauthorised access and data corruption. They include key management practices that protect data across all applications and platforms.

Safeguarding – a term used in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland to denote measures to protect the health, well-being and safety of children, who are defined as people under the age of 18, and vulnerable adults.

Service level agreement – a contract between an institution and its customers that establishes a set of deliverables that one party has agreed to provide to another.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – this typically refers to any special educational needs and disabilities that a student may have, which have been identified by the institution as requiring specific support to be put in place to assist the student in completing their studies. An example of the support might be to provide additional time to complete written assessments for students who are diagnosed as being dyslexic.

Stakeholders – this typically refers to groups who are invested in the welfare and success of an institution and its students.

Internal stakeholders – internal stakeholders include current students, faculty and academic staff, the administrative support staff, and advisory boards or committees such as the governors or trustees.

External stakeholders – external stakeholders would typically be the local community, employers of graduates, potential students or applicants, and governments or funding bodies.

Submissions – student and teacher interactions and posts relating to assessments made via the electronic learning platform.

Written statement of its mission and goals – most organisations have a published mission and/or vision statement, which sets out the key aims and aspirations of the organisation. This provides a focus for the institution and its future development.

Appendix B – Care of under 18s and vulnerable adults

BAC does not generally inspect compliance with legal and statutory requirements. However, given the importance of Safeguarding in educational contexts and the fact that we have a duty of care to ensure that such institutions are fully compliant with all safeguarding requirements, we are obliged to inspect this aspect of the provision. All organisations will still be asked to sign the Declaration of Compliance with Legal and Statutory Requirements, which also covers safeguarding. Key definitions Children: In accordance with the Children Act 1989 and 2004, a child is any person who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Vulnerable Adults: A vulnerable adult is generally defined as ‘an adult, who is unable to function cognitively or adequately undertake basic day-to-day functions without the help or oversight of someone not impaired in these ways or who is unable to protect him/herself against significant harms or exploitation’. During the inspection, the inspection team will assess an organisation on the following aspects of Safeguarding.

1. Is there a suitable policy for the protection of participants under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults, that is reviewed at least annually?
2. Is there a named DSL (designated safeguarding lead), who is responsible for implementing this policy effectively and responding to child protection allegations?
3. The policy should be a working document (regularly reviewed) which sets out an organisation’s commitment to protect children from harm and the procedures in place to support this. It should cover: policy statements, codes of conduct, health and safety, safer recruitment, training, welfare provision and child protection procedures (including: awareness, how to raise concerns, responding to disclosure, named person(s) responsible, the decision-making process, systems for recording and reporting information and handling allegations/incidents). The policy should be clear and relevant to the organisation and up-dated at least annually.
4. Has the institution made the safeguarding policy known to all adults in contact with under 18s through their role with the organisation (including employees, sub-contractors, home-stay hosts, group leaders and volunteers) and provided guidance or training relevant to its effective implementation?
5. Is there a code of conduct for staff effective in covering relationships with participants under the age of 18 and which includes whistleblowing procedures?
6. Are there approved arrangements in place to identify any person who is vulnerable and to ensure the right help and support is provided in a reasonable time scale?
7. Are up-to-date contact details recorded for a parent, carer or person acting in loco parentis for participants aged under 18 (and under 25 for participants with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, if the participants wish so)?
8. Are participants aware of how they can access support or complain, if they do not feel safe?
9. Is there an appropriate course of action to follow should a participant report abuse or concerns about their well-being? In reports of abuse, the arrangements should indicate how to receive disclosures and pass them on to statutory agencies and deal with staff who are subject to allegations.
10. Do recruitment and selection procedures follow safer recruitment best practice? Do the recruitment and selection procedures and other human resources management processes help to deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children, or are otherwise unsuited to work or care for them? Is appropriate information provided to job applicants? Do recruitment materials for roles involving responsibility for or substantial access to under 18s (staff and host families) include reference to the organisation’s commitment to safeguarding and inform applicants that suitability checks will be required?
11. Are arrangements made for appropriate checks on staff, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks from 2013 for staff who have regular, unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults, and where appropriate (based on risk assessment) on proprietor/ governors and volunteers. (Note: In accordance with best practice – appropriate DBS checks should be carried out on all staff and host families. These checks should be carried out prior to their appointment or prior to the start of their regulated unsupervised activities. If a new starter does commence employment prior to clearance being received, they must have signed a self-declaration and their access should be supervised at all times; they must not be left alone with children.)
12. Does a single, central record (SCR) exist of all checks on staff and, where appropriate, proprietor/ governors and volunteers?
13. Are references taken up on all staff prior to employment and recorded on the SCR?

14. Do all staff, volunteers and contractors undertake appropriate training on safeguarding which is recorded and monitored for currency? Is this training updated regularly in line with advice from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)?
15. For those working with regularly or hosting under 18s and vulnerable adults, does the training include how to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to disclosures from participants?
16. Is safeguarding training part of the induction training for all staff, temporary staff and volunteers newly appointed? Does this include the safeguarding policy, staff behaviour policy or code of conduct, and the identification and role of the designated safeguarding lead and how to recognise and respond to concerns?
17. Good practice is that all staff are trained to Level 1 (basic); management to Level 2 (advanced) and DSL to Level 3.
18. Is there a board level lead responsible for safeguarding? Is there a designated senior member of staff responsible for safeguarding arrangements, who has been trained to the appropriate level, (including Inter-agency working) and understands her/his responsibilities with respect to the protection and welfare of participants under 18 and vulnerable adults?
19. Is clear information provided to the parents/guardians of under 18s? Does the publicity or other information made available, before enrolment, give an accurate description of the level of care and support given to participants under 18, especially concerning any periods when participants are unsupervised as well as including sleeping arrangements when accommodated overnight or when at leisure?
20. Are there safe working arrangements for off-site activities, such as any social programme?
21. Are there effective arrangements made to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism?
22. Is there an E-Safety policy, that references the staff code of conduct, participants' use of social media and devices on site such as mobile phones and cameras?
23. Do managers and staff take action immediately if there are concerns about any form of bullying including cyber-bullying or other online risks to the participants?
24. Are arrangements for accommodation, through home-stay, halls of residence or otherwise, appropriately managed with adequate safeguards and levels of supervision and registered in accordance with national requirements?

25. When the institution arranges host family accommodation for under 18s, are enhanced DBS and barred list checks made for all permanent residents who are aged 16 or older?
26. Where under 16s are accommodated, other than with their parents or guardians, for more than 28 days, has the local authority been alerted?

Useful websites for further information and guidance on safeguarding

The Children Act 2004:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/pdfs/ukpga_20040031_en.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 – refer to this document as a basis for good practice, although it is our understanding that it is not a legal requirement in the private sector:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1161273/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023_-_statutory_guidance_for_schools_and_colleges.pdf

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-safer-recruitment-in-education

Safeguarding:

www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation/information-centres/care-children

Prevent:

https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/information_for_providers_on_prevent_obligations_0.pdf#



Website: www.the-bac.org
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