

# SHORT COURSE PROVIDER (SCP) SCHEME DOCUMENT



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

RAISING STANDARDS IN THE  
GLOBAL EDUCATION MARKET

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# 1. Introduction

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

The accreditation scheme for short course providers is designed to recognise the particular qualities and distinctive character of providers which offer short, focused training courses, for example, to professionals for continuing professional development, to trainees for broadening the experience of their chosen profession or to participants for subject reinforcement and revision.

On account of the short and often seasonal calendar of courses operated by these providers, they may hire a variety of training venues at external premises according to the specific requirements of each course.

## 2. Eligibility for accreditation

Any independent education or training provider is eligible for accreditation as a short course provider if it meets the following requirements in addition to the general requirements listed in the Accreditation Handbook:

- The provider does not offer any programmes which extend beyond 26 weeks.
- The provider uses training venues either within its own premises or at external premises which have been selected specifically for the particular timetable and requirements of individual programmes.
- The provider is able to provide evidence of its financial stability.
- Effective control of the provider is the responsibility of accountable management.
- The provider 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 provider (e.g. an assessment of any previous position held at another organisation known to BAC, in particular any provider that consistently failed to meet BAC's standards or that had previously been withdrawn by BAC).

For all providers based outside the UK:

- The provider 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 provider to prove that it meets the eligibility criteria. BAC can withdraw accreditation if a provider fails to meet the eligibility criteria at any point in the cycle.

## 3. Accreditation process

Prospective applicants are invited to contact BAC to discuss their eligibility for the scheme. If BAC is satisfied that the eligibility criteria have been met, the provider must submit a completed application form, along with supporting documents, which includes evidence of financial stability and details of referees who will be contacted to provide testimony to the reputation of the provider.

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

The full on-site inspection will measure the provider 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 entire accreditation process please see the Accreditation Handbook.

## 4. Accreditation cycle

Short Course Provider accreditation is valid for four years.

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

During an accreditation cycle, a provider 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 providers 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 provider being inspected, is chosen. An inspection team consists of a lead inspector and usually one specialist inspector for larger providers. It is usual practice for the inspection to take two days, but the actual number of days allocated will reflect the breadth and size of the provider and its services.

With newly accredited providers, 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.

Providers 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:

- Management, Staffing and Administration
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Participant Welfare
- Premises and Facilities
- Online, Distance and Blended Learning Component

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

### 5.2 Minimum standards

The minimum standards for Short Course Provider accreditation are set out in Section 11. Details are also provided of the documents which must 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 the country of operation, in connection with such matters as:

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

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

BAC inspectors will not inspect all the above areas but will note any observed breach of regulations. Although the 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 short course provider **operating in the United Kingdom (UK)** which has not yet recruited participants to its programmes.

- The status of 'approved candidate for BAC accreditation as a short course provider' can be awarded following a successful candidacy inspection.
- The provider will be approved as a 'candidate for BAC accreditation' if the Accreditation Committee is satisfied that the provider meets or exceeds BAC's minimum standards for premises, management, staffing, administration and documentation relevant to participant 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 provider must become fully operational.
- If the provider 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 provider to enrol international participants on short-term study visas for courses of up to six months and, for English language providers, for up to 11 months under an extended short-term study visa.

## 7. Programmes and awards

Due to the nature of short course providers and their focus on the specific training needs of participants, BAC accepts that programmes may feature a significant element of bespoke training and may not follow published course descriptions or schemes of work and that the successful completion of a programme may not lead, in itself, to any specific qualification, certification or traditional academic award. Under these circumstances, BAC's inspectors will consider the accuracy of any claims made by providers as to the level and status of internal awards. This will include a review of any evidence of the extent to which the provider's internal awards are accepted for the purposes of employment or further study. BAC encourages providers to involve external moderators in their assessment procedures.

## 8. Accreditation fees

All providers awarded accreditation under this scheme are required to pay an annual accreditation fee, which is calculated on the basis of the number of course days per annum. This is due when accreditation has been awarded and every September thereafter.

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

Accurate figures of course days 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 fees by the deadline given on the invoice may result in withdrawal of accreditation.

## 9. Accreditation statements and marks

Providers 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 Short Course Provider"
- "Accredited by the British Accreditation Council as a Short Course Provider"
- "Accredited by BAC as a Short Course Provider"

## 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](mailto:info@the-bac.org) for further information.

## 12. Accreditation scheme standards

### Inspection area – management, staffing and administration

#### Minimum standards 1–7

#### 1. The provider is effectively managed

- 1.1 The management structure is clearly defined, documented and understood, including the role and extent of the authority of any owners, trustees, advisors, or governing body.
- 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.
- 1.3 There are clear channels of communication between the management and staff including those working at the delivery venue or remotely.
- 1.4 The provider 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.
- 1.5 The provider has a written risk management strategy, which includes financial planning and is effectively implemented and regularly reviewed.
- 1.6 The provider conducts its financial matters professionally, transparently, and with appropriate probity.

#### 2. The administration of the provider 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 administration team is sufficient to ensure the effective day-to-day running of the provider.
- 2.3 The administrative support available is clearly defined, documented and understood.
- 2.4 Administrative policies, procedures and systems are up-to-date, thorough, well-documented and effectively disseminated across the provider.
- 2.5 Data collection and collation systems are effective in supporting the administration of the provider.

- 2.6 Participants' and trainers' personal records are sufficiently detailed and regularly updated.
- 2.7 The provider has a robust security system with policies in place for protecting the data of its staff, participants and trainers.

#### 3. The provider 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 trainers 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 trainers, includes regular, scheduled course delivery observations.
- 3.5 All staff are treated fairly as per the provider'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 provider and its courses

- 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.
- 4.2 Information on the courses available is comprehensive, accurate, readily accessible and up to date.
- 4.3 Participants are informed of the full cost of all courses, including the costs of any assessments, activities and required materials prior to enrolling at the provider.
- 4.4 The information provided ensures that participants are well informed of the status of the qualifications offered, including the awarding body and level of award.

4.5 The provider's key policies are accessible through the website.

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

- 5.1 The provider ensures that the specific courses on which participants are registered are likely to meet the participants' expectations and needs.
- 5.2 Entry requirements for each course, are set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions that are made available to prospective participants.
- 5.3 A formal application and selection process ensures that participants meet the entry requirements, and any claimed qualifications are 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 Participants receive a proper initial assessment, which includes language ability, to confirm their capability to complete the course on which they are enrolling.
- 5.6 The provider 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 participant attendance and punctuality and effective procedures and systems to enforce it where appropriate

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

## 7. The provider 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 provider's performance.
- 7.2 The provider has effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from participants and other relevant stakeholders, such as staff, partners and employers, on all aspects of the provider's provision, including formal participant 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 participants what the provider has done in response to their feedback.
- 7.6 Reports are compiled at least annually, which include the results of the provider's performance reviews and analysis of appropriate data, including participants' progress from their starting points, course completion rates, achievement rates, participants' destinations, participant 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 provider.

### Examples of documentation required

- Up-to-date organisation chart or outline description of the staff structure, with names of post-holders and individual roles
- The strategy/development plan including strategic targets
- List of committees/boards together with their terms of reference and membership
- Detailed job descriptions for all senior, academic and administrative staff
- Copies of audits and academic reviews carried out by or on behalf of the awarding bodies or partnership organisations
- Up-to-date prospectus, course brochures and other marketing material

- Responses made as a result of external audits
- Performance data maintained by the organisation, for example examination pass rates/stakeholder feedback scores/attendance rates
- Annual performance reviews against strategic targets at organisation/ department/course and programme levels
- Samples and summaries of any participant and other stakeholder feedback, including completed feedback questionnaires
- Action plans for dealing with stakeholder feedback
- Documentation relating to policies and procedures for informing stakeholders of the response made to their feedback
- Internal quality assurance documentation including copies of any policies used as a means of quality management
- Key policies underpinning the running of the organisation for example relating to staff recruitment, staff performance monitoring and staff development, quality assurance, assessment and participant welfare etc.
- Staff and participant handbooks
- Minutes of relevant committee and/or board meetings
- Minutes of staff meetings
- Detailed Curricula Vitae (CVs) for all staff including all academic/teaching staff to include evidence of academic and teaching qualifications
- Staff appraisal procedures and completed documentation
- Evidence of continuing professional development/training opportunities and individual development logs
- Staff disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Samples of administration correspondence with participants
- Completed learner application forms and any participant contracts
- Evidence of attendance monitoring, including class registers for each course/programme
- Participant files with details of registration, enrolment, attendance and qualifications
- Policy on accreditation of prior learning, including experiential learning for prospective participants
- Staff personnel files and records
- Up-to-date signed contracts of employment for all staff
- Self-employment contracts/agreements for all self-employed staff
- Briefing materials for agents
- Other management and administrative policies, procedures and systems

## Inspection area – teaching, learning and assessment

### Minimum standards 8–15

#### 8. Course management is effective

- 8.1 There is a suitably qualified and/or experienced course manager or management team with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 Training sessions are timetabled and rooms are allocated appropriately for the courses offered.
- 8.4 The allocation of trainers to courses provides a consistent learning experience, and delivery is monitored to ensure consistency across all the provision.
- 8.5 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.
- 8.6 There are appropriate policies and procedures for the acquisition of training and learning resources, which ensure that all trainers have access to the appropriate quantity and quality of resources on the day(s) of the course for the benefit of the participants.
- 8.7 Trainers are supported in their continuing professional development and are enabled to develop further pedagogic techniques to enhance the participants' learning.

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

- 9.1 The courses' design and content reflect current knowledge and practice and are regularly reviewed, and revised and take into account input from relevant stakeholders.
- 9.2 The content of the courses enables participants 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 examinations and/or 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 participants to achieve the course objectives.
- 9.5 Courses maintain an appropriate focus on any assessment objectives or statement of intended 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 participants are encouraged and enabled to develop independent learning skills
- 9.8 The provider has appropriate methods in place to encourage and measure participant engagement.
- 9.9 The academic and/or professional backgrounds and particular support needs of participants are taken into account in the planning and design of the course.
- 10. Trainers are suitable for the courses to which they are allocated and are effective in their delivery**
- 10.1 Trainers are appropriately qualified and experienced.
- 10.2 Trainers have a level of subject knowledge, pedagogic and communication skills that allows them to deliver courses effectively.
- 10.3 Trainers respond to the different backgrounds and particular support needs of participants in their delivery of the training sessions.
- 10.4 Trainers employ effective strategies to involve all participants in active participation and to check their understanding of concepts and course content.
- 11. Participants receive appropriate assessment and feedback on their performance and progress, both of which are effectively monitored**
- 11.1 Participants 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 participants' achievement of the intended learning outcomes
- 11.3 Participants progress and assessment outcomes are monitored to enable the identification of participants who are not making satisfactory progress, and prompt intervention takes place if required
- 11.4 Additional support and/or advice on alternative courses are provided to participants who are judged not to be making sufficient progress to succeed.
- 11.5 The feedback provided to individual participants is tailored to meet their specific needs and constructive in its nature and delivery.
- 11.6 Participants have appropriate access to trainers outside the scheduled course delivery time.
- 11.7 The provider takes appropriate steps to identify and discourage cheating and plagiarism and penalises offenders.
- 11.8 Realistic deadlines are set and communicated well in advance to participants and any required coursework and revision periods are scheduled in advance.
- 11.9 Prompt action is taken when participants miss deadlines or when the work submitted is not of a satisfactory standard.
- 12. The provider offers courses leading to accredited awards granted by recognised awarding bodies**
- 12.1 For courses leading to awards from the provider's country of domicile, the awarding body is recognised by the relevant regulator.
- 12.2 For courses leading to awards from an international educational institution that is authorised to operate in its country of domicile, the provider 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 participants 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 provider.

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

14.1 The provider 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 participants to appeal against their marks.

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

15.1 Participants have access to advice from an appropriate staff member on further study and career opportunities.

15.2 If the provider offers courses preparing participants for higher/further education, they have access to advice from a designated staff member both on selecting courses and institutions and on the application process.

**Examples of documentation required**

- Detailed up-to-date list of programmes available
- A detailed timetable of the courses/classes taking place at the time of the inspection
- Whole course/academic year plans/schemes of work
- Module/course descriptions
- Completed lesson/lecture plans
- Timetables for all courses
- A list of participants 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
- Assessment procedures/samples of assessment methods/ assessment tools
- Samples of marked participants' work with feedback to the participant
- Sample placement/initial tests, including completed documentation
- Records of participant progress
- Participants' academic appeals and grievance procedures
- Agreements with awarding bodies
- Documents relating to external moderation
- Evidence of monitoring of teaching/training staff, including completed classroom observation records
- Summaries of results/grades awarded for previous three years for each academic programme, or from the start date, if the courses have not been available for that time
- Copies of external examiners' reports for the previous three years for each academic programme, or from start date, if the course has not been available for that time
- Copies of annual reports to the awarding bodies for the previous three years for each academic programme, or from start date, if the courses have not been available for that time
- Catalogue of library stock

## Inspection area – participant welfare

Please see Appendix B for Safeguarding Checklist

### Minimum standards 16–21

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

- 16.1 There is at least one named staff member responsible for participant welfare who is suitably trained and/or experienced, accessible to all participants and available to provide advice.
- 16.2 Participants receive appropriate information, advice and guidance before the start of the course.
- 16.3 Participants receive an appropriate induction and relevant information at the start of the programme.
- 16.4 Participants receive appropriate information on the pastoral and emergency support available and referral to external specialists, as required, in connection with participants' mental health and well-being.
- 16.5 The provider has policies to avoid discrimination and a published procedure for dealing with any abusive behaviour, including cyberbullying, and these are effectively implemented.
- 16.6 Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place for participants under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults, which are regularly reviewed.
- 16.7 Effective arrangements, including a policy, risk assessment and staff training, are in place to protect participants from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- 16.8 There is an e-policy in place that references any existing staff and participant codes of conduct and covers participants' on-site use of social media and devices, such as mobile telephones, tablets and cameras.
- 16.9 The provider collects contact details for participants, and their emergency contact, and appropriate staff can access the information quickly and easily, in and out of normal operating hours.

#### 17. International participants are provided with specific advice and assistance

- 17.1 International participants receive appropriate advice before their arrival on travelling to and living in their host country.
- 17.2 International participants receive an appropriate induction upon arrival covering issues specific to the local area.
- 17.3 Information and advice specific to international participants 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 participants is ensured

- 18.1 Participants 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 Participants have access to a fair complaints procedure of which they are informed in writing at the start of the course.
- 18.3 Participants are advised of BAC's complaints procedure.

#### 19. Residential accommodation that is directly managed by the provider 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 participants.
- 19.2 Any residential accommodation where participants under 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 participants and their property.
- 19.4 A level of supervision is provided which meets the needs of participants.

19.5 Appropriate measures are in place to ensure that participants under the age of 18 and those over the age of 18 are separated when allocating accommodation.

## **20. The welfare of participants in home-stay accommodation is ensured, and the provider's relationship with the hosts is properly managed**

20.1 Due care is taken in selecting home-stay accommodation so that it provides a safe and comfortable living environment for participants and is appropriately located for travel to and from the provider.

20.2 Any home-stay accommodation is inspected before participants are placed and is subject to regular re-inspection by a responsible representative or agent of the provider.

20.3 The provider 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 participants before and during the placement.

20.5 Clear monitoring procedures are in place with opportunities for participant feedback, and prompt action taken in the event of problems.

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

21.1 Participants 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 participants.

21.3 The activities within the social programme have been chosen with consideration for their affordability for the majority of participants.

21.4 The activities organised by the provider are effectively 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**

- Information for learners relating to qualifications and awarding bodies
- Induction packs for home and international learners
- Initial guidance documents for learners
- Complaints policy and procedure documentation
- Policy documents related to discrimination, bullying and abusive behaviour
- Documents related to residential accommodation
- Documents related to home-stay accommodation including advice to home-stay learners and organisations
- Learners' social programme
- Careers advice and guidance documentation
- Policies relating to preventing radicalisation and extremism
- Radicalisation and extremism risk assessment
- Evidence of staff training in preventing radicalisation and extremism
- For documentation relating to safeguarding please see Appendix B

## **Inspection area – premises and facilities**

### **Minimum standards 22–25**

#### **22. The provider has secure possession of and access to its premises**

22.1 The provider has formal arrangements in place which means it has possession of and/or access to suitable premises.

22.2 The provider has access to suitable external premises of a temporary or occasional nature for training purposes.

#### **23. The premises provide a safe, secure and clean environment for participants 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 participants, staff and visitors.

- 23.4 General guidance on health and safety is made available to participants, 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 participants 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. Training rooms and other learning areas are appropriate for the courses offered

- 24.1 Training rooms and other learning areas provide adequate accommodation for the training sessions allocated to them.
- 24.2 Training rooms 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 participants and staff

- 25.1 Participants have access to sufficient space, so they can carry out their own private work and/or study.
- 25.2 Trainers have access to sufficient space for preparing teaching/training sessions, marking work and relaxation.
- 25.3 Participants 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/trainers 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 provider.

### Examples of documentation required

- Floor plan of each site being inspected
- Health and safety guidance for participants, staff and visitors
- Number, specification, location and accessibility of computing and related IT resources
- A guide to the library and IT facilities

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

### Minimum standards 26–31

## 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 trainer and participant 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 provider to verify that the participant 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 participants and trainers and take action immediately if there are concerns about cyberbullying or other online risks to participants.

## 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 programme delivery and the management of the trainers.
- 27.2 The provider has a sufficient number of qualified online trainers to give individualised instructional service to each participant.
- 27.3 The allocation of online trainers 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 programme 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. Trainers have an acceptable level of technical knowledge**

28.1 Trainers demonstrate an understanding of the special challenges and demands of online, distance and blended learning.

28.2 Online trainers are properly and continuously trained with respect to provider policies, participant needs, instructional approaches and techniques and the use of appropriate instructional technology.

28.3 Performance review procedures for online trainers incorporate regular monitoring of their feedback to participants.

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

29.1 Participants are made aware of the necessary level of digital literacy required to follow the stated programmes.

## **30. Online services provided meet the reasonable needs of participants**

30.1 Instructions and suggestions on how to study and how to use the learning materials are made available to assist participants in learning effectively.

30.2 Staff are available to assist participants to resolve issues of a general and/or technical nature, and all enquiries from participants are handled promptly and sympathetically.

30.3 The provider ensures that participants understand any system requirements and have access to appropriate technical advice to assist with technological problems which are the provider's responsibility.

30.4 The provider 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 programmes is fit for purpose and effective**

31.1 The provider uses appropriate and readily accessible technology to optimise the interaction between the provider and the participant and to enhance instructional and educational services.

31.2 The provider 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 trainers and staff working remotely.

### **Examples of documentation required**

→ Evidence of tutor monitoring

## 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 participant 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 participant.

**Active participation** – the active and engaged involvement of participants, 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 participants' 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 participants 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 participants, internal committees with participant 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 participants 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, participants are expected to undertake independent learning. Independent learning places increased educational responsibility on the participant 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 participants to study independently.

**Intended learning outcomes** – an intended learning outcome describes in detail what participants 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 participant 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.

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

**Participant engagement** – participants influence the content, materials, and pace of teaching. The participant is placed at the centre of the learning process. Participants 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.

**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 participants 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.

**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.

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

**Internal stakeholders** – internal stakeholders include current learners, 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 learners or applicants, and governments or funding bodies.

**Submissions** – participant 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, homestay 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 included 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 are 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](http://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](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](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-safer-recruitment-in-education)

### Safeguarding:

[www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation/information-centres/care-children](http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/accreditation/information-centres/care-children)

### Prevent:

[www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/information\\_for\\_providers\\_on\\_prevent\\_obligations\\_0.pdf](http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/information_for_providers_on_prevent_obligations_0.pdf)





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