



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM INSPECTION (Short Course Provider)

PROVIDER: Reach Cambridge

ADDRESS: The Guildhall
Market Square
Cambridge
CB2 3QJ

HEAD OF PROVIDER: Jenny Evans

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF INSPECTION: 6 August 2024

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation, 28 November 2024

PART A – INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the provider

Reach Cambridge (Reach/the Provider) was established as a private limited company in 2004. It has provided short training programmes in Cambridge since June 2005. The programmes are offered in person in the summer as two-, four- or six-week courses. Until recently, the programmes were offered in a modified way online, but these online courses have been discontinued.

Reach hires premises from colleges of the University of Cambridge to deliver a programme of courses for international high-school students in the summer months. At the time of the inspection, Reach hired premises from Trinity Hall Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Cambridge and Churchill College Cambridge for on-site administration, teaching and residential premises. Reach also has an administrative office in The Guildhall, Cambridge.

The Provider aims to prepare participants for their future living and learning in a university, widening their horizons with unforgettable experiences, world-class teaching and the chance to grow in confidence. Reach aims to achieve this through its programme of challenging courses, varied group activities, lectures and excursions, alongside an organisational culture that includes care for others and the building of a cohesive community.

The Head of the Provider is the Managing Director (MD), whose work is overseen by the Company Director. Daily operations are led by the MD, supported by a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) that includes the Finance Manager, Assistant Director, Operations Director and Director of Curriculum. There is also a support team, including an Administrator, a Head of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and several curriculum advisers.

There is a roster of trainers who are recruited on a seasonal, project-based or self-employed basis. Other staff, such as programme directors, welfare directors and technology co-ordinators are also employed on a seasonal basis as required. A large welfare team of 38 seasonal supervisors is employed.

2. Brief description of the current provision

The scheduled provision comprises pre-university programmes in academic and vocational subjects, as well as taster courses in additional areas and wider learning opportunities such as youth leadership. The provision includes academic study of a range of subjects in Humanities, Sciences, Social Sciences, Engineering, Law, Architecture, Medicine, Business, Psychology, Physics, Politics and other career- and business-related areas. Programmes in English as a Second Language (ESL) and preparation for Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) are also offered.

The programmes offered are designed for international high-school students who aim to progress to a university anywhere in the world. The programmes are offered in the summer. Programmes are offered as in-person courses of two, four or six-weeks' duration.

Some programmes are also offered as additional taster courses in the afternoons for participants wishing to try different subjects. In addition to the core academic component, courses include evening lectures, workshops on university life, excursions, and sporting and other recreational activities. Participants receive a certificate of completion at the end of the programme.

At the time of the inspection, there were 124 participants attending the programmes in person, with an additional two online participants. There were slightly more female than male participants.

Participants came from over 50 different countries. Significant numbers come from the United States of America (USA), and from countries in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. There were also a few participants from the United Kingdom (UK). Although aimed primarily at participants aged between 15 and 17 years, both younger

and older participants are accepted on courses. At the time of the inspection, 73 participants were aged 16 or 17 years, and 51 participants were aged under 16 years.

The provision is driven by participants' needs and interests and is designed to prepare participants for university. The popularity of the different types of programmes changes according to participants' interests. The current trend is towards more vocational subjects, such as Medicine, Business and Psychology, with Physics, Politics and Law also being popular. There is a slightly lower number of participants taking up programmes in the Humanities.

Enrolment takes place continuously throughout the year. The courses do not require any entry qualifications. Participants are advised to have a level of English that is sufficient to understanding sophisticated academic language and to converse with other participants and staff in English at all times. Most participants are international high-school students in schools that use English as the medium of instruction.

3. Inspection process

This interim inspection was undertaken by one inspector during a one-day visit to Trinity Hall College. The inspector met with the Company Director, the MD, who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Finance Manager, the Director of Curriculum, the Director of Operations, participants and trainers. The teaching premises, the administrative offices and the residential accommodation were inspected. The administration offices in The Guildhall were also inspected. The inspector also observed a variety of in-person lessons. A wide range of relevant documentation was scrutinised. Reach Cambridge co-operated fully during the inspection process.

4. Inspection history

Inspection type	Date
Full Accreditation	7–8 August 2008
Interim	11 August 2009
Supplementary	29 June 2011
Interim	1 August 2014
Re-accreditation	10–11 March 2016
Interim	13 June 2018
Re-accreditation	9 & 11–12 August 2022

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

Reach has decided to discontinue teaching online. All teaching is now delivered in person. During the inspection, a total of two participants were learning online. These were legacy participants still to finish their courses.

2. Response to action points in last report

There were no action points identified in the last report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that if a course is going to have more than one tutor, this should be explained to participants prior to their committing to the course.

This recommendation has been addressed. All courses are now taught by one tutor for consistency and to avoid disruption to the learning.

Reach Cambridge should consider further supporting the online tutors to increase their use of the teaching strategies and embedded interactive facilities that are available to them to promote participant engagement.

This recommendation is not applicable. The online courses have now been discontinued.

It is recommended that Reach Cambridge aligns the wording of the participants' complaints policy on the website and the policy in the student handbook so that they both incorporate BAC's complaints procedure.

This recommendation has been addressed. The complaints policy, contained within the terms and conditions, now has an e-mail link to BAC's external redress scheme.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Discussions with management, trainers, the administrator and participants indicate that Reach is well managed. Senior managers follow detailed job descriptions, giving them a clear understanding of their roles. They are well qualified and bring significant experience to the Provider. Communication channels are well organised and effective. The Provider maintains a written risk management strategy that is consistently monitored. This results in a smoothly operating organisation that meets its goals effectively.

The administration is carried out by the support team, which is efficient and well organised. The support team is appropriately staffed to ensure the smooth operation of daily activities. Administrative processes are further enhanced by the effective use of relevant software, such as customer relationship management tools.

Policies, procedures, and systems are thoroughly detailed and well documented and are comprehensively disseminated through the staff handbook and, when necessary, in weekly staff meetings. Data collection processes support the Provider's administration effectively, and an appropriate data protection policy is in

place, which was recently audited by third-party experts. Consequently, the participants benefit from an efficiently run operation.

Discussions with management, trainers and participants and a review of documentation indicate that Reach has effective policies in place for recruiting qualified and experienced staff. All candidates undergo appropriate pre-employment checks. The use of a Single Central Record (SCR) provides a centralised, easily accessible document for verifying that all recruitment processes have been carried out. This effectively safeguards the participants and keeps them safe.

Staff performance is reviewed every six months, providing regular feedback and development opportunities. Managerial and administrative staff receive strong support for their Continuing Professional Development (CPD), with much of the training occurring on the job and focusing on new software or recently implemented processes and procedures. Additionally, a new staff training platform has been introduced, allowing seasonal staff to complete their initial training before the start of the summer programme. These measures ensure that Reach has well-qualified staff.

The website provides comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date programme information, including course outlines, availability, fees, participant reviews and a sample timetable. This ensures prospective participants have all the necessary details to determine whether the courses meet their needs.

A review of the website and a discussion with participants show that Reach ensures that participants are carefully selected. The Reach website provides clear information on course requirements, including motivation, objectives, educational background and future aspirations. The application process, which includes submitting a personal statement, allows participants to outline their expectations and demonstrate language proficiency.

Reach responds promptly to all application queries and has an effective system in place for identifying and addressing any additional learning support needs, which participants can disclose during enrolment. Participants with undisclosed learning needs are supported once their needs are identified. As a result, participants can choose the course that best suits their individual needs.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is supported by policy and effectively communicated through the student handbook and during induction. Timely and appropriate action is taken in response to participant absence, leading to exceptionally high attendance rates.

A discussion with managers and a review of documentation indicate that Reach employs effective systems to monitor its own standards by regularly obtaining, recording and analysing feedback. The development of an annual report is used well to consolidate this feedback and includes an outline of specific action points.

Detailed reports are generated after each programme, which include an evaluation of feedback and completion data. Action plans, informed by this feedback, are appropriately detailed and assign responsibility to specific staff members. This ensures continuous improvement and accountability, resulting in consistently high standards across programmes.

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met Partially Met Not Met

Comments

Lesson observations and discussions with managers and trainers confirm that course delivery is efficiently managed and appropriately planned by an experienced team. A single trainer is appointed for the entire duration of a course to aid consistency. Course delivery is closely monitored through scheduled, recorded classroom observations and feedback questionnaires.

Trainers develop the courses according to clear guidelines on content and delivery methods. Both participants and trainers confirm that the courses are well resourced, as confirmed by the inspection findings. As a result, the courses are well suited to the different needs of the participants.

Courses are designed and planned to ensure participant success, with tutors creating and adjusting the courses based on feedback and their own experience of teaching the course. Course outlines are annually updated according to input from participants and trainers. This ensures the courses are kept current.

Lesson observations show that trainers are well matched to their courses and deliver them effectively, bringing expertise and enthusiasm that engage participants effectively. Trainers' subject knowledge and commitment enhance the learning experience, allowing trainers to address diverse learning needs effectively.

The trainers plan a variety of engaging activities and use technology to support different learning styles, resulting in high participant engagement. With small class sizes, tutors can offer personalised support, plan practical activities when possible, and employ a range of effective techniques to assess understanding. As a result, participants engage fully.

Lesson observations show that class feedback is both effective and timely, providing strong support. Trainers actively circulate during lessons, offering individualised advice and checking for understanding. Spoken feedback on classroom and end-of-course presentations is constructive and developmental. Consequently, participants clearly understand how to improve and advance in their learning.

Participants confirm that they receive a certificate of completion at the end of the programme. This includes information about the academic course they have studied, some suggested further academic reading, as well as a separate page detailing what else they have done during the programme outside class time. This encourages the development of independent learning.

4.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Discussions with managers, participants and trainers as well as a review of documentation indicate that participants receive welfare support that is tailored to their age, background and individual circumstances. The MD, who is appropriately trained and experienced, oversees welfare matters. Every participant undergoes a comprehensive and suitable induction.

Reach has implemented effective measures to safeguard participants, including a thorough and appropriate safeguarding policy. This policy includes guidelines on the code of conduct and health and safety, and clearly outlines the procedures to follow if allegations are made. All staff undergo appropriate pre-employment checks, including relevant Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

Safeguarding training is provided to all staff, including returning members, as part of their induction. The entire SLT has received suitable safeguarding training, to Safeguarding Levels 2 and 3. All staff have annual refresher training in safeguarding. The safeguarding arrangements are reviewed regularly.

There is an appropriate risk assessment, policy and training in place to prevent radicalisation and extremism. These comprehensive measures ensure a safe and supportive environment, fostering the well-being and security of all participants throughout the programme.

Discussions with participants show that international participants are given relevant, specific guidance on travel to and living in the UK before their arrival. The induction includes an introduction to the local area and provides useful information for international participants at the start of their course. Reach also

collects information on cultural and religious considerations during the enrolment process. This ensures that all participants are well prepared and supported in an inclusive environment throughout their stay.

A review of the website shows that participants are enrolled under fair contractual terms and conditions, which are clearly outlined and easily accessible. These terms include appropriate refund arrangements for cancellations. A transparent complaints policy is also available through the website and in the student handbook and contains a link to the BAC complaints procedure. These clear and accessible policies ensure transparency and fairness.

Reach hires undergraduate study bedrooms for its residential accommodation from Trinity Hall College, Corpus Christi College and Churchill College. These are all secure premises. Health and safety procedures, including for fire safety, are addressed effectively during participant induction and reinforced throughout the course. Residential staff offer consistent pastoral care and are always available to address any issues. The level of supervision provided appropriately matches participants' needs. These measures ensure a safe living environment and enhance participants' overall well-being during their stay.

Participants engage in a comprehensive activity programme outside class, with suitable opportunities to explore the local area and experience aspects of UK culture. The programme promotes interaction effectively. It is also responsive to participants' preferences. The social activities are supervised by qualified and experienced staff, and all are thoroughly risk assessed.

The participants, in discussion with the inspector, expressed their enthusiasm for the social programme. The social programme effectively enhances the development of their cultural knowledge and fosters social connections. It contributes to a safe and enjoyable experience.

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

The standards are judged to be:

Met

Partially Met

Not Met

Comments

Reach has formal agreements with three University of Cambridge colleges, namely Trinity Hall, Corpus Christi and Churchill, granting access to suitable residential, teaching and administrative facilities. The programme is conducted in the colleges' vacant teaching rooms, undergraduate accommodation and administrative offices, all situated in the colleges' grounds.

The premises are secure, with access restricted to a single, continuously supervised entry point that is permanently locked and requires a key fob for entry. As a result, the participants confirmed that they feel safe whilst attending their programme and inspection findings confirm this view.

The teaching rooms at Trinity Hall are generously sized and are well equipped. The rooms are fitted with appropriate audio-visual equipment and reliable wireless technology, which supports trainers effectively in delivering a diverse range of learning activities.

Trinity Hall College offers suitable additional facilities for participants, trainers and administrative staff in its grounds. A suite of rooms, conveniently located near the teaching areas, serves as administrative offices and a staff room. The office is well equipped and adequately resourced. This provides an efficient and supportive environment for both educational and administrative activities.

The year-round administrative offices in The Guildhall are in a shared-use building within walking distance of the colleges. Participants do not visit these premises. The building's security is ensured through a receptionist, key-fob access and Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV). The office itself is spacious and well equipped, with the building offering additional facilities typically needed by a business. This appropriately supports the efficient operation of the Provider's administration.

4.5 Compliance Declaration

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.

Yes No

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS

The SLT is strong, with senior managers and tutors collaborating effectively as a team, which enhances decision-making and creates a supportive environment for both staff and participants.

Trainers are highly knowledgeable in their fields, and participants significantly benefit from their expertise.

The programmes are thoughtfully designed, allowing participants to deepen their understanding of their chosen subjects while exploring entirely new areas of study.

The courses are held in exceptional premises located in the heart of Cambridge, providing a tranquil environment that greatly supports the well-being of participants.

ACTIONS REQUIRED

None

High Medium Low

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

None

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER COMMENTS, IF APPLICABLE

THE INSPECTION WAS CARRIED OUT BY:

John Rooney

Lead Inspector