

An Introduction to Eaquals Accreditation







An Introduction to Equals

Our Association

Equals is an international non-profit membership association that exists to promote excellence in language education. We are expert in accreditation, quality assurance, training and standardisation and conduct research and create resources to develop language teaching and learning throughout the world.

We welcome applications for Equals Accredited Membership from language teaching institutions that are committed to achieving excellence.

Equals Accreditation

Accreditation by Equals enables providers of language education to demonstrate that they meet high international standards.

Equals accreditation is for all types of language teaching organisation and applies to the teaching of all languages. We accredit university language centres as well as private training institutions and we operate in any country. Accreditation by Equals is awarded after a rigorous quality assurance process including an on-site inspection.

The Equals Charters

The Equals Charters state the values which underpin our quality assessment system, together with the promises and guarantees that members of Equals make to their stakeholders. The Equals Quality Standards, against which institutions are evaluated, are derived from our Charters. The Charters can be found on our website at www.equals.org

Support and Development

The Equals scheme is more than just a system for accrediting institutions. We seek to make a constructive, consultative contribution to the improvement of the organisations we inspect and to language learning and teaching in general.

We provide expert support and regular opportunities for advice throughout the accreditation process. Equals inspection reports include recommendations for further improvements and offer a blueprint for future development.



The Eaqals Accreditation Process

What is inspected?

All aspects of language education services, and the management, staff and systems that support these. Eaqals accredits the teaching of all languages.

Who are the inspectors?

International teams of inspectors. Eaqals inspectors are language education professionals with considerable managerial and international experience who have successfully completed the Eaqals inspector training scheme. They develop and maintain their expertise through regular professional development sessions.

How are institutions assessed?

Eaqals assesses the institution as a whole and in its own particular context. Inspectors evaluate evidence from different sources to verify that the Eaqals Quality Standards are being met.

What are the main elements of an Eaqals inspection?

- **Observations of teaching and other academic activities**
- **Review of course design, assessment and certification**
- **Review of academic documentation and other management records**
- **Meetings with key staff – managers and teachers**
- **Meetings with learners**
- **Checking of premises, learning resources, facilities and accommodation where applicable**

What sort of standards are applied?

The Eaqals accreditation scheme is international and the standards are designed to apply in all national contexts. Inspected institutions are asked to provide evidence that they meet these standards. Where Eaqals standards are higher than local regulations, Eaqals criteria are applied.

How long is an inspection?

This depends on the size of the institution. The inspection team need enough time to review the whole operation of the language centre. For large institutions this can take up to 4 days, while an average-size language centre will normally need 2 days.

How much does it cost?

Costs depend on the size of the institution and the Secretariat will provide further information. Eaqals is a not-for-profit association and candidate institutions cover the inspectors' professional fees, travel and accommodation costs.

How soon can new institutions be accredited?

The first inspection of a single language centre can normally be organised after the institution has been delivering language education services for 24 months.



What support does Eqaals provide?

The Director of Accreditation works closely with institutions to decide the best way to prepare for a first inspection and the overall time frame. Eqaals offers a pre-inspection advisory service, adapted to the needs of each candidate institution. This can include a review of documents, a site visit by one of our inspectors and regular consultation. If required, Eqaals can deliver additional on-site training sessions.

How long does it take to be accredited by Eqaals?

This will vary slightly for each institution. It normally takes up to 2 years and typically follows this path:

- The language centre sends a first enquiry to the Secretariat, who provide initial information and advice.
- The candidate institution works with the Eqaals Self Assessment Handbook to benchmark its systems and processes against Eqaals standards.
- A follow-up consultation with the Eqaals Director of Accreditation is arranged to agree the next steps.
- An on-site Advisory Visit is conducted by an Eqaals inspector to give advice and consultancy on whether the candidate is ready for a full inspection. The inspector will signal what further developments are needed to meet the Eqaals Quality Standards.
- The candidate receives a written report after the Advisory Visit and has a follow-up discussion with Eqaals.
- The institution implements further developments in line with the recommendations from the Advisory Visit.
- The institution applies to Eqaals for a first inspection at least 4 months before its preferred inspection date.
- The first inspection takes place, followed by a report and verdict 8 weeks after the inspection.

Do all institutions have an Advisory Visit?

An Advisory Visit is not compulsory but is offered to help applicants to achieve a successful inspection outcome.

What happens after a successful first inspection?

The institution becomes an Accredited Member of Eqaals and benefits from all the advantages of joining our Association's international network. Members pay an annual membership fee and participate in Eqaals events and academic projects.

What if an institution does not meet every standard?

Eqaals will make a requirement, explaining what action must be taken before the institution can be accredited. Only those that fully comply with Eqaals standards can become Accredited Members.

How long does accreditation last?

Accredited Members of Eqaals are re-inspected every four years so that the quality of the education and services provided by members can be regularly verified.

How can I find out more?

Anna Andor, our Services Manager, will be pleased to provide full information and put you in direct contact with our Director of Accreditation. Please write to info@eqaals.org



The Equals Quality Standards

The Quality Standards give language centres an outline of the organisational framework and processes which should be in place before an institution can become an Accredited Member of Equals.

1 Management and Administration

- 1.1 There is an institutional ethos which provides the foundation for the institution's activities.
- 1.2 The leadership and organisational structure of the institution support this mission and the achievement of its objectives.

2 Teaching and Learning

- 2.1 The pedagogical approach and methods reflect the institution's educational philosophy.
- 2.2 The quality of course delivery consistently provides opportunities for effective learning.
- 2.3 Lessons are planned with reference to the course programme and the learning and motivational needs of individuals and the group; specified learning outcomes are shared with learners.
- 2.4 The opportunities offered for learning are varied, making use of available technology and resources.
- 2.5 Learners have the opportunity to develop their study skills and to share responsibility for their own learning.

3 Course Design and Supporting Systems

- 3.1 There is a statement of the institution's educational philosophy with written descriptions of its learning programmes, including course objectives and content.
- 3.2 All language course programmes are specified by levels which refer to the Common European Framework of Reference to Languages (CEFR), and learning objectives are related to the global descriptors of CEFR levels.
- 3.3 There is an academic management and coordination structure, with supporting systems, which ensure the implementation of the institution's educational philosophy.

4 Assessment and Certification

- 4.1 Assessment procedures are compatible with the institution's educational philosophy and course objectives.
- 4.2 Placement procedures are appropriate to the learning context and to learners' needs.
- 4.3 Systems for assessing language competence provide reliable, valid and fair means of evaluating progress and achievement in a way that is appropriate for the course and the learners.
- 4.4 Reports and certificates issued to learners indicate their achievements in terms of the course objectives and content. They provide a reliable statement of the level achieved.
- 4.5 Where information on public examinations is provided, relevant advice and support is given to learners.

5 Academic Resources

- 5.1 The course books or other core course materials, online learning platforms and resources, and reference materials reflect course objectives and the methodology used.
- 5.2 There is a system for monitoring learning material developed in-house.
- 5.3 All equipment and electronic connectivity is accessible and well maintained.

6 Learning Environment

- 6.1 The teaching and study environment meets the requirements of course programmes and learners.
- 6.2 Any non-pedagogical facilities and/or spaces required for the services offered are fit for purpose and well maintained.
- 6.3 Arrangements are made to protect the health and ensure the safety of learners and staff.



7 Client Services

- 7.1 Advice and support is available to learners and sponsors throughout the course, including welfare arrangements, where appropriate.
- 7.2 There are systems for monitoring and administering the provision of any leisure programme and/or accommodation. Any social programme takes account of learners' interests.

8 Quality Assurance

- 8.1 There are systems to foster a culture of quality through continuous evaluation, reflection and action.
- 8.2 The learning experience is fully monitored by management systems (including regular classroom observations) which are used to improve the quality of all services.
- 8.3 There are procedures which enable learners and sponsors to give regular feedback relating to the academic and other services provided.

9 Staff Profile and Development

- 9.1 The competences, experience and qualifications of managers, teachers and administrative staff are relevant and adequate for each area of responsibility.
- 9.2 There are systems to provide appropriate support and guidance for all staff including a regular staff performance review.
- 9.3 There is a formal framework to assure appropriate continuous professional development for all staff.

10 Staff Employment Terms

- 10.1 All staff hold current employment contracts; these are fair and comply with all statutory requirements, as stated in a statutory declaration made by the institution.
- 10.2 The terms and conditions of employment offered to staff are fair and conform to local requirements.

11 Internal Communications

- 11.1 The responsibilities, lines of accountability and channels of communication among members of management and/or staff are clearly defined and documented.
- 11.2 There is formal, documented, communication and consultation between staff and managers, scheduled as appropriate.
- 11.3 Information is available to staff about the institution, its mission and any planned developments.
- 11.4 Grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place for staff and are known to them.
- 11.5 Information about Eaqals and its resources is available to staff and learners.

12 External Communications

- 12.1 All promotional materials accurately describe the institution's learning services: the range and functionality of resources and/or online tools offered, and other services and facilities.
- 12.2 Contractual information provided to learners and sponsors is accurate and complete, and expressed in easily understood language.
- 12.3 Accredited members make information about Eaqals publicly available; they display the Eaqals Charters publicly, and use the Eaqals logo correctly.


www.eaquals.org

Take the first step towards joining a world leader in language education. Contact us today to see how Eaquals can support the development of your organisation.

info@eaquals.org



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